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MOULTON , RICHARD
GREEN

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ENGLISH AUDIENCES . . .

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DATE:

1900

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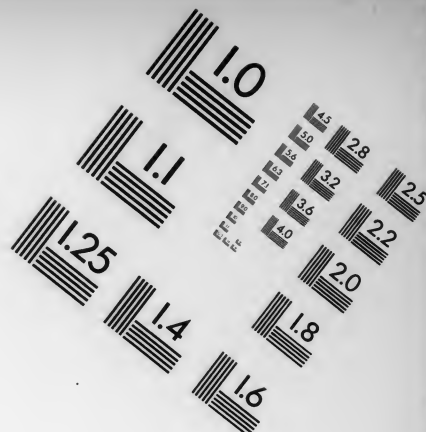
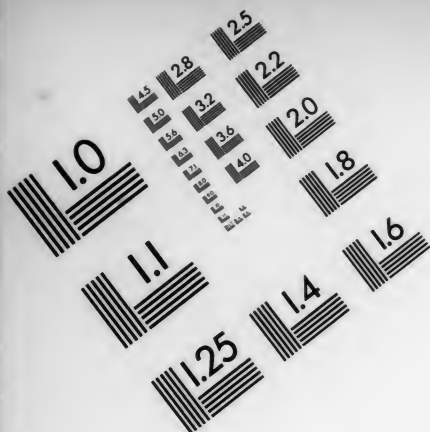


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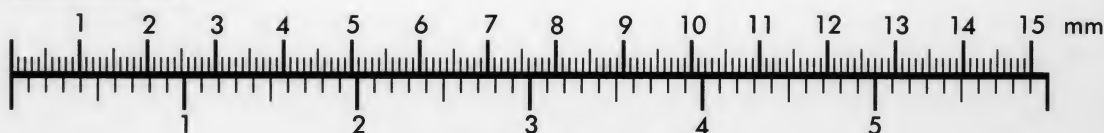
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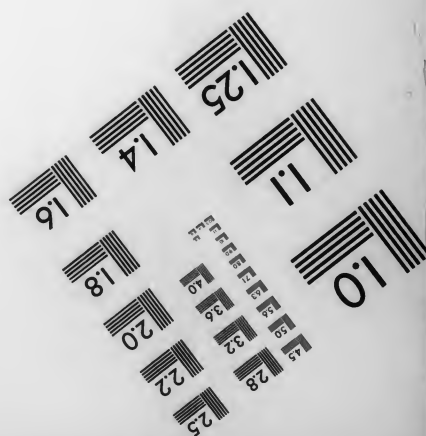
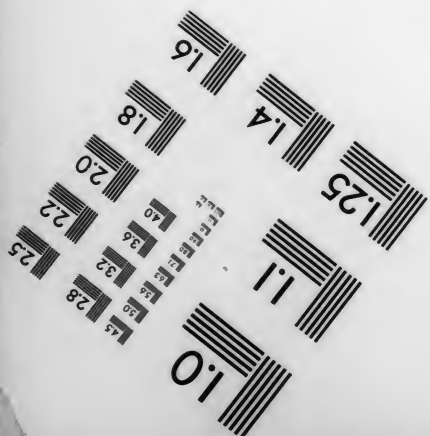
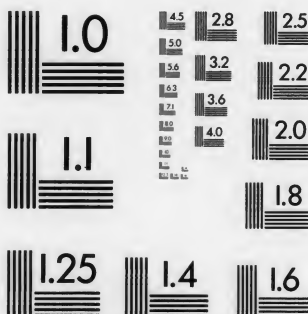
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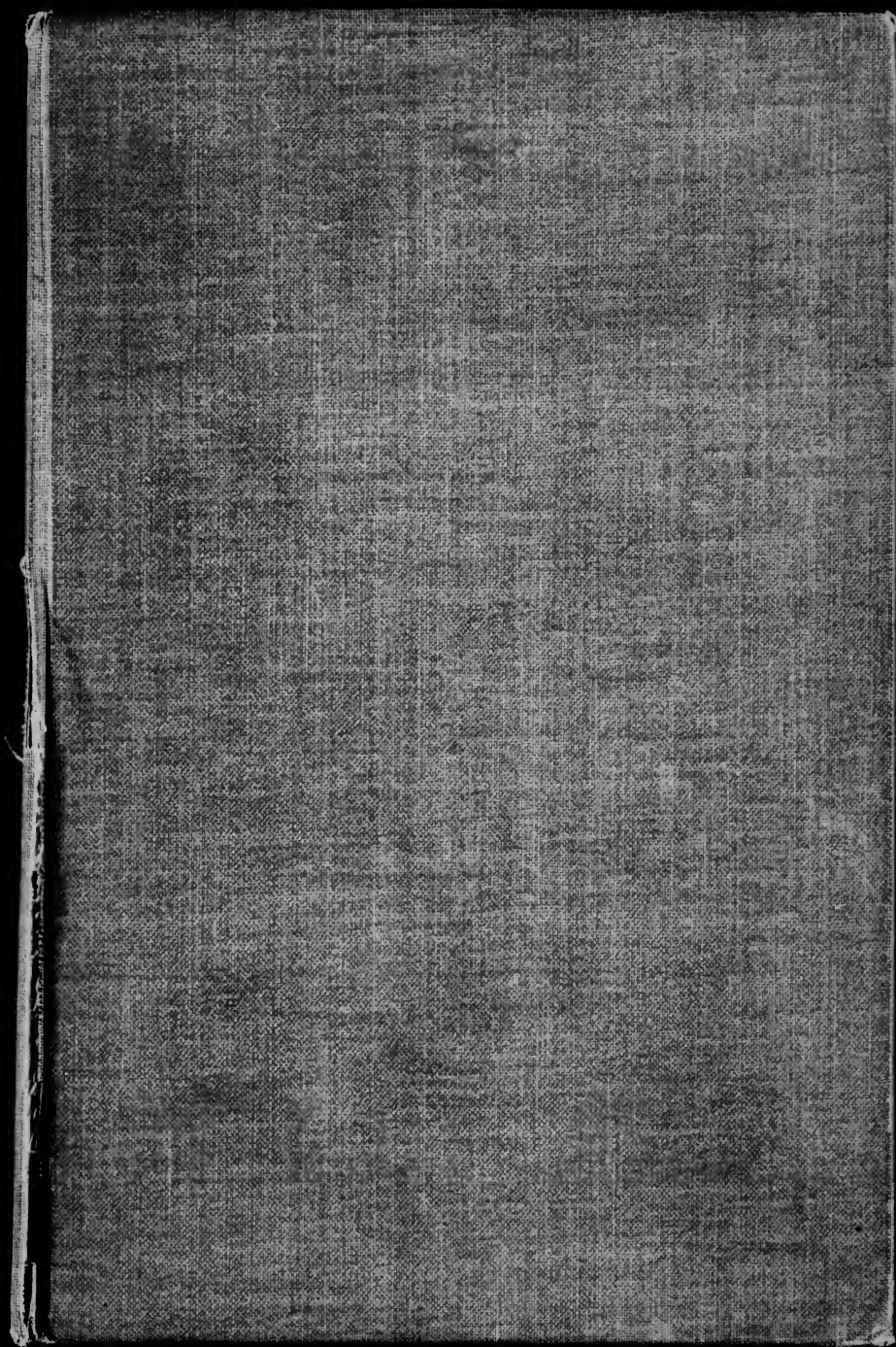
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THE ANCIENT DRAMA

(TRAGEDY)

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REFERENCES

In the case of Æschylus and Sophocles the numbering of lines agrees with that in the translations of Plumptre and in the original. In the plays from Euripides the numbering is that of the lines in the cheap translation (Routledge's Universal Library).

A CONDENSATION OF THE TRILOGY

STORY OF ORESTES

[*ORESTEIA*]

BEING THE ONLY GREEK TRILOGY, OR THREE-PLAY DRAMA,
WHICH HAS COME DOWN TO US COMPLETE

CONSISTING OF

MORNING PLAY:

AGAMEMNON

MIDDAY PLAY:

THE SEPULCHRAL RITES

[*Choëphori*]

AFTERNOON PLAY:

THE GENTLE GODDESSES

[*Eumenides*]

COMPOSED BY ÆSCHYLUS, AND BROUGHT ON THE STAGE AT ATHENS
AT THE FESTIVAL OF THE 'GREATER DIONYSIA,' IN MARCH OF 458
B.C., DURING THE POLITICAL EXCITEMENT OCCASIONED BY
THE POPULAR ATTACK ON THE ARISTOCRATIC
COURT OF MARS' HILL, OR AREOPAGUS

The passages quoted are from Plumptre's Translation

MEMORANDUM

The Sacred Legends touched by this Trilogy would be familiar, in outline, to the Auditors: e.g.:

The woes of the House of Atreus: the foundation of them laid by Atreus when, to take vengeance on his brother Thyestes, he served up to him at a banquet the flesh of his own sons;

His grandsons were Agamemnon and Menelaus: Menelaus' wife, Helen, was stolen by a guest, Paris of Troy, which caused the great Trojan war.

Agamemnon, who commanded the Greek nations in that war, fretting at the contrary winds which delayed the setting out of the fleet, was persuaded by the Seers to slay his own daughter Iphigenia, to appease the Deities;

Her mother Clytemnestra treasured up this wrong all through the ten years' war, and slew Agamemnon on his return, in the moment of victory, slew him while in his bath by casting a net over him and smiting him to death with her own arm;

Then she reigned in triumph with Ægisthus her paramour (himself one of the fatal house), till Orestes her son, who had escaped as an infant when his father was slaughtered, returned at last, and slew the guilty pair;

For this act of matricide, though done by the command of Apollo, Orestes was given up to the Furies, and driven over the earth, a madman, till in Athens, on Mars' Hill they say, he was cleansed and healed.

Cassandra too was involved in the fall of Agamemnon: the Trojan maiden beloved of Apollo, who bestowed upon her the gift of prophecy; when she slighted the God's love, Apollo—for no gift of a god can be recalled—left her a prophetess, with the doom that her true forebodings should ever be disbelieved. She, having thus vainly sought to save Troy, with its fall fell into captivity, and to the lot of Agamemnon, with whom she died.

The name of Orestes would suggest the proverbial friendship of Orestes and Pylades, formed in Orestes' trouble and never broken.

TRILOGY OF THE ORESTEIA

AGAMEMNON

FIRST PLAY: IN THE MORNING:

PROLOGUE

The Permanent Scene is decorated to represent the façade of the Palace of Agamemnon, at Argos; the platform over the Central door appearing as a Watch-tower. At intervals along the front of the Palace, and especially by the three doors, are statues of Gods, amongst them Apollo, Zeus, and Hermes. The time is supposed to be night, verging on morning. Both Orchestra and Stage are vacant: only a Watchman is discovered on the Tower, leaning on his elbow, and gazing into the distance.

The Watchman soliloquizes on his toilsome task of watching all night through for the first sight of the signal which is to tell of the capture of Troy: he has kept his post for years, till the constellations which usher in winter and harvest-time are his familiar companions; he must endure weather and sleeplessness, and when he would sing to keep his spirits up he is checked by thoughts of his absent master's household, in which, he darkly hints, things are "not well." [He is settling himself into an easier posture, when suddenly he springs to his feet.] The beacon-fire at last! [He shouts the signal agreed upon, and begins dancing for joy.] Now all will be well; a little while and his hand shall touch the dear hand of his lord; and then—ah! "the weight of an ox rests on his tongue," but if the house had a voice it could tell a tale! [Exit to bring tidings to the queen.] 39

PARODE, OR CHORUS-ENTRY

As if roused by the Watchman's shout, enter the Chorus: Twelve Elders of Argos: in the usual processional order, combining music, chanting and gesture-dance, to a rhythm conventionally associated with marching. They enter on the right (as if from the city), and the Processional Chant takes them gradually round the Orchestra towards the Thymele, or Altar of Dionysus, in the centre.

The Chorus in their Processional Chant open the general state of affairs, especially bringing out the doublesidedness of the situation [which is the key-note of the whole Drama]: the expected triumph over Troy, which cannot be far distant now, combined with misgivings as to misfortunes sure to come as nemesis for the dark deeds connected with the setting out of the expedition. They open thus:

Lo! the tenth year now is passing
Since, of Priam great avengers,
Menelaos, Agamemnon,
Double-throned and double-sceptred,
Power from sovran Zeus deriving—
Mighty pair of the Atreidæ—
Raised a fleet of thousand vessels

40

353062

Of the Argives from our country,
 Potent helpers in their warfare,
 Shouting cry of Ares fiercely;
 E'en as vultures shriek who hover,
 Wheeling, whirling o'er their eyrie,
 In wild sorrow for their nestlings,
 With their oars of stout wings rowing,
 Having lost the toil that bound them
 To their callow fledglings' couches.
 But on high One—or Apollo,
 Zeus, or Pan,—the shrill cry hearing,
 Cry of birds that are his clients,
 Sendeth forth on men transgressing
 Erinnyes, slow but sure avenger;
 So against young Alexandros
 Atreus' sons the Great King sendeth,
 Zeus, of host and guest protector:
 He, for bride with many a lover,
 Will to Danaï give and Trojans
 Many conflicts, men's limbs straining,
 When the knee in dust is crouching,
 And the spear-shaft in the onset
 Of the battle snaps asunder.
 But as things are now, so are they,
 So, as destined, shall the end be.
 Nor by tears nor yet libations
 Shall he soothe the wrath unbending
 Caused by sacred rites left fireless.

50

60

70

They are going on to soliloquize how they themselves have been shut out of the glorious expedition, for, in matters of War, old age is but a return to boyhood; when

82

The Chorus-Procession having reached the Thymele, turn towards the Stage. Meanwhile the great Central Door of the Stage has opened, and a solemn Procession filed out on the Stage, consisting of the Queen and her Attendants, bearing torches and incense, and offerings for the Gods; they have during the Choral Procession silently advanced to the different Statues along the front of the Palace, made offerings and commenced the sacrificial rites. When the Chorus turn towards the Stage, the whole Scene is ablaze with fires and trembling with clouds of incense, rich unguents perfume the whole Theatre, while a solemn Religious ritual is being celebrated in dumb show.

The Chorus break off their Processional Chant [keeping the same rhythm] to enquire what is the meaning of these solemn rites, and whether the Queen can solve their doubt, which wavers between hope and foreboding:

The Queen signifying, by a gesture, that the Ritual must not be interrupted by speech, the Chorus proceed to take their regular position round the Thymele, and address themselves to their

104

PRELUDE

*the Music, Poetry, and Gesture-dance changing from a March to a highly Lyrical rhythm; the evolutions of the Dance taking Right and Left hand directions, but without the Chorus quitting their position round the Altar.**

*This is a mere guess: we have no information as to how the evolutions of a Proem differed from those of a regular Choral Ode.

Strophe: during which the evolutions take a Right Hand direction.

The Chorus resume: though shut out from War their old age has still suasive power of song, and they can tell of the famous omen seen by the two kings and the whole army as they waited to embark: two eagles on the left devouring a pregnant hare:

Sing a strain of woe
 But may the good prevail!

120

Antistrophe: the same rhythm line for line as the Strophe, but the evolutions taking Left Hand direction.

and the Prophet Calchas interpreted: they shall lay Troy low, only beware lest the Victors suffer from the wrath of some God, Artemis who hates the eagle:

Sing a strain of woe,
 But may the good prevail!

137

Epode: a different rhythm, and the evolutions without any special direction.

May some Healer, Calchas added, avert her wrath, lest she send delays upon the impatient host and irritate them to some dread deed, some sacrifice of children to haunt the house for ever! So he prophesied in piercing strains.

Sing a strain of woe,
 But may the good prevail

154

ENTRY-ODE

With a change of rhythm, the Chorus pass into their first regular Choral Ode; Strophes and Antistrophes as in the Prelude, but the Evolutions now leading them from the central Altar to the extreme Right and Left of the Orchestra.

Strophe I: Evolutions leading Chorus from Thymele to extreme Right of Orchestra.

It must be Zeus—no other God will suffice—Zeus alone who shall lift from my* mind this cloud of anxiety:

Antistrophe I: Evolutions the same, rhythm for rhythm, as the Strophe, but leading the Chorus back from the Right of Orchestra to the central Altar.

For on Zeus, before whom all the elder Gods gave way, they must rely who are bent on getting all the wisdom of the wise.

168

Strophe II: a change of rhythm: evolutions leading Chorus from the central Altar to the extreme Left of Orchestra.

Yes: Zeus leads men to wisdom by his fixed law that pain is gain; by instilling secret care in the heart, it may be in sleep, he forces the unwilling to yield to wiser thoughts: no doubt this anxiety is a gift of the Gods, whose might is irresistible.

176

Antistrophe II: same rhythm, but evolutions leading back from Left of Orchestra to central Altar.

When Agamemnon, not repining, but tempering himself to the fate which smote him, waited amidst adverse winds and failing stores:

184

*The Chorus generally speak of themselves in the Singular.

*Strophe III: fresh change of rhythm,
Chorus moving to Right of Orchestra.*

and the contrary winds kept sweeping down from the Strymon, and the host was being worn out with delays, and the prophet began to speak of 'one more charm against the wrath of Artemis, though a bitter one to the Chiefs'

195

*Antistrophe III: same rhythm, movement
back from Right of Orchestra to Altar.*

at last the King spoke: great woe to disobey the prophet, great woe to slay my child! how shed a maiden's blood? yet how lose my expedition, my allies? May all be well in the end!

210

*Strophe IV: change of rhythm;
movements to the left of Orchestra.*

So when he himself had harnessed
To the yoke of Fate unbending,
With a blast of strange new feeling
Sweeping o'er his heart and spirit,
Aweless, godless and unholy,
He his thoughts and purpose altered
To full measure of all daring,
(Still base counsel's fatal frenzy,
Wretched primal source of evils,
Gives to mortal hearts strange boldness,)
And at last his heart be hardened
His own child to slay as victim,
Help in war that they were waging
To avenge a woman's frailty,
Victim for the good ship's safety.

219

Antistrophe IV: back to Altar.

All her prayers and eager callings
On the tender name of Father,
All her young and maiden freshness,
They but set at naught, those rulers,
In their passion for the battle.
And her father gave commandment
To the servants of the Goddess,
When the prayer was o'er, to lift her,
Like a kid, above the altar,
In her garments wrapt, face downwards,—
Yea, to seize with all their courage,
And that o'er her lips of beauty
Should be set a watch to hinder
Words of curse against the houses,
With the gag's strength silence-working.

Strophe V: Altar to Right of Orchestra.

And she upon the ground
Pouring rich folds of veil in saffron dyed,
Cast at each one of those who sacrificed
A piteous glance that pierced
Fair as a pictured form,

And wishing,—all in vain,—
To speak; for oftentimes
In those her father's hospitable halls
She sang, a maiden pure with chastest song,
And her dear father's life
That poured its threefold cup of praise to God,
Crowned with all choicest good,
She with a daughter's love
Was wont to celebrate

238

Antistrophe V: Back to Altar.

What then ensued mine eyes
Saw not, nor may I tell, but Calchas' arts
Were found not fruitless. Justice turns the scale
For those to whom through pain
At last comes wisdom's gain.
But for our future fate,
Since help for it is none,
Good-bye to it before it comes, and this
Has the same end as wailing premature;
For with to-morrow's dawn
It will come clear; may good luck crown our fate!
So prays the one true guard,
Nearest and dearest found,
Of this our Apian land.

248

EPISODE I

'The Ritual on the Stage being now concluded, Clytemnestra advances to the front. At the same moment the Choral Ode is finished and the Chorus take up their usual position during the Episodes, drawn up in two lines in front of the Altar facing the Stage. They speak only by their Foreman (or Coryphæus), and use the ordinary Iambic Metre (equivalent to our Blank Verse).

The Foreman of the Chorus repeats his enquiries of Clytemnestra as to the meaning of this sudden rejoicing, guardedly adding that it is his duty to pay respect to his lord's wife in his absence—Clytemnestra announces that Troy has been taken this last night—rapid interchange of stichomuthic dialogue, the Chorus expressing their amazement as to how the news could travel so fast.

Cho. What herald could arrive with speed like this?
Clytem. Hephaestus flashing forth bright flames from Ida:
Beacon to beacon from that courier-fire
Sent on its tidings; Ida to the rock
Hermæan named, in Lemnos: from the isle
The height of Athos, dear to Zeus, received
A third great torch of flame, and lifted up,
So as on high to skim the broad sea's back,
The stalwart fire rejoicing went its way;
The pine wood, like a sun, sent forth its light
Of golden radiance to Makistos' watch;
And he, with no delay, nor unawares
Conquered by sleep, performed his courier's part:
Far off the torch-light to Euripos' straits

Advancing, tells it to Messapion's guard :
 They, in their turn, lit up and passed it on,
 Kindling a pile of dry and aged heath.
 Still strong and fresh the torch, not yet grown dim,
 Leaping across Asôpos' plain in guise
 Like a bright moon, towards Kithæron's rock,
 Roused the next station of the courier flame.
 And that far-travelled light the sentries there
 Refused not, burning more than all yet named :
 And then the light swooped o'er Gorgôpis' lake,
 And passing on to Ægiplanctos' mount,
 Bade the bright fire's due order tarry not ;
 And they, enkindling boundless store, send on
 A mighty beard of flame, and then it passed
 The headland e'en that looks on Saron's gulf
 Still blazing. On it swept, until it came
 To Arachnæan heights, the watch-tower near ;
 Then here on the Atreidæ's roof it swoops,
 This light, of Ida's fire no doubtful heir.
 Such is the order of my torch-race games ;
 One from another taking up the course,
 But here the winner is both first and last ;
 And this sure proof and token now I tell thee,
 Seeing that my lord hath sent it me from Troia.

307

While the *Chorus* are still overcome with amazement, *Clytemnestra* triumphs over the condition of Troy that morning : like a vessel containing oil and vinegar, the conquered, bewailing their first day of captivity over the corpses of husbands and sons, the victors enjoying their first rest free from the chill dews of night and the sentry's call—and all will be well, if they remember the rights of the Gods in their sack of the city : ah ! may they not in their exultation commit some sacrilegious deed of plunder, forgetting that they have only reached the goal, and have the return to make ! If they should, the curse of those who have perished might still awake against them [*C.* thus darkly harping upon her secret hope that vengeance may still overtake them for the sacrifice of her daughter].

345

Exit Clytemnestra, with Attendants.

After a few words of triumph (*in marching rhythm*), that Zeus, protector of host and guest, has visited the proud Trojans, and brought them into a net of bondage that neither young nor full-grown can overleap, the *Chorus* proceed to a more formal expression of their feelings in

357

CHORAL INTERLUDE I

breaking, as regularly in the Choral Odes, into highly Lyrical rhythms accompanied with Music and Gesture-dance, the evolutions of which lead them alternately to Right and Left of Orchestra and back to Altar.

Strophe I: evolutions from Altar to Right.

Yes : it is the hand of Zeus we may trace in all this ! Now what will they say who contend that the Gods care not when mortal men trample under foot the inviolable ? Troy knows better now, that once relied on its abounding wealth : ah ! moderate fortune is best for the seeker after Wisdom ; Wealth is no bulwark to those who in wantonness have spurned the altar of the Right and Just.

375

Antistrophe I: evolutions from Right back to Altar, rhythm as in Strophe.

Such a man is urged on by Impulse, offspring of Infatuation, till his mischief stands out clear, as worthless bronze stripped of its varnish. So Paris sees now his light-hearted crime has brought his city low. He came to the house of the Sons of Atreus, and stole a Queen away, leaving Shame where he had sat as Guest.

392

Strophe II: change of rhythm, evolutions from Altar to Left.

She, leaving to her countrymen at home
 Wild din of spear and shield and ships of war,
 And bringing, as her dower,
 To Ilion doom of death,
 Passed very swiftly through the palace gates,
 Daring what none should dare ;
 And many a wailing cry
 They raised, the minstrel prophets of the house,
 "Woe for that kingly home !
 Woe for that kingly home and for its chiefs !
 Woe for the marriage-bed and traces left
 Of wife who loved her lord !"
 There stands he silent ; foully wronged and yet
 Uttering no word of scorn,
 In deepest woe perceiving she is gone ;
 And in his yearning love
 For one beyond the sea,
 A ghost shall seem to queen it o'er the house ;
 The grace of sculptured forms
 Is loathed by her lord,
 And in the penury of life's bright eyes
 All Aphrodite's charm
 To utter wreck has gone.

409

Antistrophe II: back to Altar.

And phantom shades that hover round in dreams
 Come full of sorrow, bringing vain delight ;
 For vain it is, when one
 Sees seeming shows of good,
 And gliding through his hands the dream is gone,
 After a moment's space,
 On wings that follow still
 Upon the path where sleep goes to and fro.
 Such are the woes at home
 Upon the altar hearth, and worse than these.
 But on a wider scale for those who went
 From Hellas' ancient shore,
 A sore distress that causeth pain of heart
 Is seen in every house.
 Yea, many things there are that touch the quick :
 For those whom each did send
 He knoweth ; but, instead
 Of living men, there come to each man's home
 Funereal urns alone,
 And ashes of the dead.

425

*Strophe III: change of rhythm,
evolutions from Altar to Right.*

War is a trafficker; in the rush of battle he holds scales, and for the golden coin you spend on him he sends you back lifeless shapes of men; they sent out men, the loving friends receive back well-smoothed ashes from the funeral pyre. They sing the heroic fall of some—all for another's wife; and some murmur discontent against the sons of Atreus, and some have won a grave in the land they have conquered. 441

*Antistrophe III: evolutions repeated,
but from Right back to Altar.*

So sullen discontent has been doing the work of a people's curse: therefore it is that I am awaiting with dim forebodings the full news. The Gods do not forget those who have shed much blood, and sooner or later the dark-robed Deities of the Curse consign the evil-doer to impassable, hopeless gloom. Away with the dazzling success that attracts the thunderbolt! be mine the moderate lot that neither causes nor suffers captivity. 458

*Epode: change of rhythm and Chorus
not moving from the Altar.*

The courier flame has brought good news—but who knows whether it be true?—Yet it is childish when the heart is all aglow with the message of the flame to be turned round by everchanging rumour.—Yet it is the nature of a woman to believe too soon. [Observe how the Chorus, setting out on an ode of triumph, have come back to their persistent forebodings.] 471

Suddenly at the Side-door on the extreme Left of the Stage (signifying distance) appears a Herald, covered with dust, crowned with olive in token of victory. The Chorus immediately fall into their Episode position to receive him, the Foreman expressing their anticipations as the Herald traverses the long stage to the point opposite the Chorus.

EPISODE II

Foreman of Chorus. Now we shall have a clearer message than that of the beacon-fires: all is well or . . . but I cannot put the other alternative. *The Herald (arrived opposite the Chorus)* solemnly salutes the land of Argos he had never hoped to see again, salutes the several Gods whose statues are now bright with the morning sun, especially Apollo who has proved himself a Healer, and Hermes patron of Heralds; and then announces Agamemnon is close at hand, victorious over Troy and having sent Paris to his merited punishment.—Observe how in the parallel dialogue that follows the foreboding tone creeps in again in the midst of the news of triumph. 520

Chor. Joy, joy, thou herald of the Achæan host!

Her. All joy is mine: I shrink from death no more.

Chor. Did love for this thy fatherland so try thee?

Her. So that mine eyes weep tears for very joy.

Chor. Disease full sweet then this ye suffered from . . .

Her. How so? When taught, I shall thy meaning master.

Chor. Ye longed for us who yearned for you in turn.

Her. Say'st thou this land its yearning host yearned o'er?

Chor. Yea, so that oft I groaned in gloom of heart.

Her. Whence came these bodings that an army hates?

Chor. Silence I've held long since a charm for ill.

Her. How, when your lords were absent, feared ye any?

Chor. To use thy words, death now would welcome be. 533

The Herald, not understanding the source of the Chorus' misgiving, goes on to say of course their success is mixed: so fare all but the Gods. They have had their tossings on the sea, their exposure to the night dews till their hair is shaggy as beasts': but why remember these now? our toil is past—so, he suddenly recollects, is that of the dead they have left behind—but he will shake off these feelings: Troy is captured. The *Chorus* feel youthful with such happy tidings. 569

Enter Clytemnestra from the Palace.

Clyt. Now they will believe me, who were saying just now that women believed too soon. What joy for a wife equal to that of a husband's return? and I have kept my trust as stainless as bronze. [*Exit into Palace.*] The *Foreman* goes on to enquire as to Menelaus: the Herald would fain not answer, and brings out the Greek dread of mingling bad news with good—at last he is forced to acknowledge Menelaus has disappeared, his ship sunken from the fleet by a terrible storm in which

They a compact swore who erst were foes,
Ocean and Fire, 634

and the sea 'blossomed with wrecks of ships and dead Achæans:' the fleet itself barely escaped. [Thus: foreboding indirectly assisted by its appearing that one of the two sons of Atreus has already been overtaken by Nemesis.] 663

CHORAL INTERLUDE II

[*Positions, etc., as before.*]

Strophe I: to the Right.

Who could foresee so well and give her the name *Helen*—a *Hel** to men and ships and towers? She came out of bowers of gorgeous curtains, she sailed with breezes soft as Zephyrs yet strong as Titans, and unseen reached the leafy banks of the Simois; but bloodshed was in her train, and on her track followed hosts of hunters that carried shields. 680

Antistrophe I: back to Altar.

So there is a wrath that works vengeance after long waiting: to the *Iliad* that received her she was a dear bride: then there was a shout of 'Paris, Paris,' in the Bridal Song: now his city has celebrated a Wedding of Death, and called on Paris' name in other tones. 695

Strophe II: Altar to Left.

So once a lion's cub,
A mischief in his house,
As foster child one reared,
While still it loved the teats;
In life's prelude dawn
Tame, by the children loved,
And fondled by the old,
Oft in his arms 'twas held,
Like infant newly born,

With eyes that brightened to the hand that stroked,
And fawning at the hest of hunger keen. 704

* This is simply an English pun substituted for a Greek one: the name Helen resembles a Greek root which signifies captivity.

Antistrophe II: back to Altar.

But when full-grown, it showed
The nature of its sires;
For it unbidden made
A feast in recompense
Of all their fostering care,
By banquet of slain sheep;
With blood the house was stained,
A curse no slaves could check,
Great mischief murderous:

By God's decree a priest of Ate thus
Was reared, and grew within the man's own house.

715

Strophe III: Altar to Right.

So I would tell that thus to Ilion came
Mood as of calm when all the air is still,
The gentle pride and joy of kingly state,
A tender glance of eye,
The full-blown blossom of a passionate love,
Thrilling the very soul;
And yet she turned aside,
And wrought a bitter end of marriage feast,
Coming to Priam's race,
Ill sojourner, ill friend,
Sent by great Zeus, the God of host and guest—
Erinnyes, for whom wives weep many tears.

726

Antistrophe III: back to Altar.

The time-honored saying is that Prosperity grown big will not die childless,
its offspring will be a Woe insatiable. I say no, it is not the Prosperity, it is
an Impious deed that breeds Impious deeds like the parent stock.

737

Strophe IV: from Altar to Left.

Recklessness begets Recklessness, this begets full-flushed Lust and Godfor-
getting Daring, two black curses to a household.

746

Antistrophe IV: back to Altar.

Justice will dwell in houses blackened with smoke where life is ruled by law,
but averts her eyes from gold-decked mansions conjoined with hands defiled:
and it is this Justice that is directing the course of things to its appointed
goal.

755

*At this point, a grand Procession of the returning Warriors from Troy
enters Stage and Orchestra by the Left Side-Door [signifying distance]:
Agamemnon in his chariot, followed in another chariot by Cassandra as
captive, but still in the garb of prophetess: then a train of Soldiers laden
with trophies and leading a train of Trojan captive women. The
Chorus fall into their Episode position to receive them.*

EPISODE III

Chorus (in marching rhythm as the Procession traverses the long Stage.)

Son of Atreus, how are we to hit upon welcome that shall be fit for thee, not
missing or overshooting the mark? In both condolence and congratulation
men's faces often belie their hearts; thou who knowest thine own sheep,
should'st be able to tell kindness from flattery. We confess, when thou wentest
forth on thy expedition, thou wast to us like a face limned by an unskilled
artist, in the deed thou did'st to inspire false courage. Now, without a

It is well that thus went,
of thee in thy absence. [Obse

metre were settling into ordinary
by whose help we have laid Troy low, the rains
up clouds of smoke as sweet incense to the Deities of Ven-
your sentiments, both then and now, I approve: prosperity
true sympathy amidst the envy it excites; envy that has the
of missing its own and seeing another's good. Experience has
me the difference between professing and true friends: my unwilling
comrade Ulysses alone proved true to me. As to the state we will deliberate
in full counsel as to what needs preserving, and where disease calls for sur-
gery. At present I must give thanks at my own hearth for my safe return.

*Here the Central Door of the Stage is thrown open, and enter Clytæ-
mnestra to welcome her lord, followed by attendants bearing rich draperies
of purple and dazzling colors.*

827

Clyt. Notwithstanding your presence, Senators of Argos, I must pour out
my heart to my lord. Ah! a sad thing is a wife waiting at home for her
absent husband! hearing of wounds, which if true would have made you a
fiddled net, of deaths enough for a three-lived Geryon: again and again I
have been stopped with the noose already on my neck! This is the reason
why you see not your son Orestes: wonder not, he is being brought up by
an ally to whom I sent him, lest danger befall us. I cannot weep: my tears
have run dry by my weepings and sleepless watchings for the beacon. Now
at ease I hail my lord

as watch-dog of the fold,
The stay that saves the ship, of lofty roof
Main column-prop, a father's only child,
Land that beyond all hope the sailor sees,
Morn of great brightness following after storm,
Clear-flowing fount to thirsty traveller.

870

The bare ground is not fit for the foot that has trampled on Ilion: strew
Attendants tapestry on the floor as the Conqueror steps from his car.
*Attendants commence to lay down the draperies: Agamemnon (hastening
up them)* rebukes Clytæmnestra for the excessive tone of her welcome,
bids her not make him offensive to the Gods, by assuming an honor
for the Gods alone, no man being safe in prosperity till he has died; fame,
foot-mats, and never to lose the path of Wisdom, are his glories. A con-
sues [the false Clytæmnestra anxious to entangle him in an act of In-
nation]; at last he yields, but removes the shoe from his foot, to avert the
men of such presumptuous display. He then commends the captive Cas-
sandra to the Queen's kind treatment, and *Clyt.* renews her lofty expressions
there is store of purple in the palace, and many such robes would she
to welcome his return, the root of the household bringing warmth in
and coolness in the dog-days. Ah! may Zeus work out for me "all
wish for." [So *Exeunt: Ag. walking barefoot on the rich tapestry.*
Cassandra alone remains on the Stage in her chariot.]

949

CHORAL INTERLUDE III

I: to the Right.

that the gate of our hearts, and we lack steadfast
It is not long since that fatal starting for

959

Antistrophe I: back to

we seen with our own eyes the sa...
within itself a dirge of fate.
... send they prove false oracles!

Strophe II: to the Left.

When Wealth o'erflows, Restlessness, as a near neighbor w...
between, presses it on with perpetual desire for more, till Prosperity
suddenly on an unseen rock—yet even then, by sacrificing a portion of the
cargo, the rest may be saved; so by plenteous harvests sent from Zeus, hun-
ger and pestilence may be allayed: 980

Antistrophe II: back to Altar.

but when blood has once been poured upon the ground, what charm can
bring it back? Zeus struck dead the Healer who found how to restore life.
I would give my misgiving relief in pouring out words of warning: but I
know that fate is certain and can never be escaped; so I am plunged in
gloom, with little hope ever to unravel my soul that burns with its hot
thoughts. 1000

EXODUS, OR FINALE

Re-enter Clytemnestra to fetch Cassandra. Clyt. addresses Cassandra in
moderate tone, bidding her adapt herself to her new life and yield to those
who wish to soften her captivity. [*Cassandra pays no attention and seem-
ingly gazing into vacancy.*] The Chorus endorses Clytemnestra's advice. At
length it occurs to Clytemnestra that Cassandra cannot speak Greek, and she
bids her give some sign. [*No sign, but a shudder convulses her frame.*]
Thinking she is obstinate Clytemnestra will wait no longer [*exit Clyt. into
Palace to the sacrifice*]. The Chorus renew their advice to Cassandra.
She at length leaves the chariot and suddenly bursts into a cry of horror. 1030

Then follows, marking the crisis of the drama, a burst of lyrical excitement.
The dialogue between Chorus and Cassandra falls into lyrical strophes and
antistrophes: Cassandra, by her prophetic gift, can see all that is going on
about to be consummated within the Palace. Her wailings reproach
patron and lover Apollo, who has conducted her to a house of blood;
she sees the past murders that have stained the house, she sees the preparat-
ions for the present deed, the bath, the net, the axe; then her wailings wax
wilder as she sees that she herself is to be included in the sacrifice. More-
over, time her excitement gradually passes over to the Chorus: at first they
mistaken her cries for the ordinary lamentations of captives (and borne
part in the dialogue in the ordinary 'blank verse'); then their emotions
aroused (and their speech falls into lyrics) as they recognize the old
family history and remember Cassandra's prophetic fame; as she
to the deed going on at the moment they feel a thrill of horror, but on
understand and take her words for prophecy of distant events, which
connect with their own forebodings; thus in her struggles to get her
believed Cassandra becomes more and more graphic in her notices.
Scene her mental eye is seeing, and the excitement crescendoes until

As if the crisis were now determined, the dialogue settles
into 'blank verse' again. Cassandra... Orchestra...
She will no longer speak veiled prophecy... war...
the sunlight. She begins with the... it...
since that primal woe that defiled...
Chorus wonder an alien can know the

lets them know of her amour with Apollo, and how she gained the gift of
prophecy and then deceived the God and was doomed to have her prophecies
borned.—Continuing her vision she points to the phantom children, 'their
palms filled full with meat of their own flesh,' sitting on the house: in re-
venge for that deed another crime is this moment about to stain further
the polluted dwelling, a brave hero falling at the hands of a coward, and
by a plot his monster of a wife has contrived.—The Chorus still perplexed,
Cassandra NAMES Agamemnon, the Chorus essaying vainly to stop the ill-
fated utterance.—Then Cassandra goes on to describe how she herself must
be sacrificed with her new lord, a victim to the jealous murderess; bitterly
approaching Apollo, she strips from her the symbols and garb of her pro-
phetic art, which the god has made so bitter to her, and moves to the
'butcher's block,' foretelling how the Son shall come as his father's avenger
and hers.—The Chorus ask, why go to meet your fate instead of escaping?
Cassandra knows Fate is inevitable.—Again and again she shrinks back
from the door, 'tainted with the scent of death;' then gazing for the last
time on the loved rays of the Sun, and invoking him as witness and avenger,
she abandons herself to her doom.

Ah, life of man! when most it prospereth, 1298
It is but limned in outline; and when brought
To low estate, then doth the sponge, full soaked,
Wipe out the picture with its frequent touch.

[*Passes through the Central Door into Palace.*]

The Chorus (in lyrical rhythm). It is true good fortune can never be
fended from the visitation of evil, which no strong palace can bar out.
What will it avail Agamemnon to have taken Troy and come in honor
home, if it be really his destiny to pay the penalty of that old deed of blood-
guiltiness? 1313

(*Here a loud cry is heard from within the Palace.*)

The Chorus recognize the voice of the King, and fear the deed is accom-
plished. In extreme excitement the Chorus break up, and each member, one
after another, suggests what is to be done; at last they compose their ranks
to learn what has actually occurred. 1342

*Suddenly, by the machinery of the Roller-stage [Eccyclema], the interior of
the Palace is moved to the front of the Stage, and discovers Clytemnestra in
blood-stained robes, standing with attendants by the corpses of Agamemnon and
Cassandra, the former lying in a silvered bath covered with a net.*

Clytemnestra, in an elaborate speech, glories in her deed. Deceit was
necessary in dealing with foes: now standing where she did the deed, she
glories in it: glories in the net in which she entangled and rendered him
powerless, in the blows, one, two, three, like a libation, which she struck,
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triumph: he had come home to drain the goblet of curses his old deed had
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Foreman, she repeats: it is the handiwork of my artist hand. After the
Chorus have recovered from their astonishment they (*in a lyrical burst*) de-
nounce her: her confession is the incense on the Victim's head, she shall
feel the people's strong hate, and have an exile's doom. Clyt. (*calmly
in Blank Verse*): they denounced no such exile against Agamemnon when
he sacrificed her daughter, the first of her travail pangs. Besides, are
they sure they are the stronger? Perchance, though old, they may yet
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have to learn. *Chorus* (in a similar lyrical burst): she is now maddened
with the spirit of vengeance, but she will one day find a nemesis, blow for

blow. *Clyt.* solemnly (*in Blank Verse*) swears by the deed she has done and the curse for which she did it, she has no fear of Nemesis, as long as *Ægisthus* is her shield. Meanwhile, there they lie: the wife-wronger and his mistress.

Then follows an elaborate lyrical scene: the *Chorus* giving vent to the excitement in *Strophes and Antistrophes* irregularly succeeding one another. *Clytæmnestra* occasionally joining in. O for death, sudden and without lingering, now that our beloved Protector is gone! Ah! Helen! one more deed of woe to your account! *Clyt.* No need to wish for death or upbraid Helen. *Cho.* (interrupting) O dread Power that dost attack this household working even through women deeds of dread! *Clyt.* Now thou art right, it is the Evil Genius of the House that feeds in their hearts the lust of blood bringing fresh blood-guilt ere the old is healed. *Cho.* Yes, there is Power wrathful to the House; but it must be through Zeus he works; whereas amongst mortal men is wrought apart from Zeus?

Ah me! Ah me!

My king, my king, how shall I weep for thee?
What shall I speak from heart that truly loves?
And now thou liest there, breathing out thy life,

In impious deed of death,
In this fell spider's web!

Yes woe is me! woe, woe!

Woe for this couch of thine unhonorable!
Slain by a subtle death

With sword two-edged, which her right hand did wield.

Clyt. You speak of me as the doer: it was the Avenger of the seed of Atreus who did the deed in the semblance of this dead man's wife. *Cho.* None will hold thee guiltless of the deed; yet, perchance, thou mayest have had as helper the avenging Fiend of that ancestral time: he presses on this rush of murders of near kin.

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And now thou liest there, breathing out thy life,

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With sword two-edged, which her right hand did wield.

Clyt. This deed brings no dishonor to me: he slew my daughter and his own, wept over with many a tear; now slain in recompense he is gone to Hell with nothing to boast over. *Cho.* Whither escape from this House? no longer drops, but fierce pelting storm of blood shakes it to its basement. *Cho.* Oh that earth had received me ere I saw this sad sight! Who will perform funeral rites and chant the dirge? Wilt thou who hast slain dare to mourn him?—*Clyt.* It is no care of thine: we will give him burial; and for mourning—perhaps Iphigenia will greet him kindly by the dark streams below.—*Cho.* Hard it is to judge; the hand of Zeus is in all this; ever throughout this household we see the fixed law, the spoiler still is spoiled. Who will drive out from this royal house this brood of curses dark? *Clyt.* Thou art right; but here let the demon rest content; suffice it for me that my hand has freed the house from the madness that sets each man's hand against each. [Observe: in this last infatuated confi-

dence and throughout *Clytæmnestra's* exultation in the deed the dramatist is laying the foundation for the second play of the Trilogy.] 1554

Enter Ægisthus by one of the two Inferior doors in front of the scene [representing the inferior parts of the Palace in which he has been concealed since the return of Agamemnon].

Ægisthus salutes the happy day of vengeance which shows him *Agamemnon* paying penalty for the deeds of his father: he relates the quarrel between this father *Atreus* and his own father *Thyestes*, how when the one brother came as suppliant to the other *Atreus* spread before him the horrid banquet of his own child's flesh, at the knowledge of which he died. *Ægisthus* himself had suffered banishment at the hands of *Atreus* while yet a child, and now has returned full grown to work vengeance on the son of his wronger, to see the long contrived nemesis brought to full conclusion.—*Chorus* note that he confesses the deed, and he shall not escape the righteous curse a people hurls with stones.—*Æg.* Know your place: you are oarsman, we command the ship; prison and fasting are admirable devices for helping old people to keep their tempers within bounds. Defiances are interchanged: the *Chorus* taunting him that he had to get a woman to do the deed he dared not do himself; *Æg.* contemptuously says the working out of the fraud was the proper province of a woman, especially as he was a known foe.—The *Chorus* threaten vengeance and suggest the name of *CRESTES* as avenger: At this *Clytæmnestra* starts, *Ægisthus* enraged gives the signal at which

1626

Bodyguard of Ægisthus pour in through both the Inferior doors on either side of the Central door of the Palace, and fill the stage [thus producing one of the Scenic Tableaux of which Æschylus was fond]. The Chorus, though of course outnumbered, are nothing daunted, as representing the legitimate authority of the State now Agamemnon is dead, and therefore sure to be backed by the City; they make as if to ascend the stage.

Contest in blows between *Chorus* and *Bodyguard of Ægisthus* appears inevitable, but *Clytæmnestra* throws herself between them, urges that enough ill has already been done, and after further defiances, forces *Ægisthus* away and play abruptly terminates: the *Chorus* returning to the Right into the City, and the *Bodyguard* into the Palace.

SECOND PLAY: MID-DAY:

THE SEPULCHRAL RITES

(CHOEPHORI)

PROLOGUE

The Permanent Scene, as before, represents the Palace of Agamemnon at Argos. The only difference is that the place of the Thymele in the centre of the Orchestra is taken up by Agamemnon's Sepulchre. Enter by the Left Side-door (signifying distance) Orestes and Pylades, and descending the Orchestra-staircase advance to the Sepulchre.

Orestes, invoking the Conductor of the Dead, lays locks of hair and fragments of garments as offerings on his Father's tomb, cut off as he had been by exile from being present at the actual Funeral-rites:

He is interrupted by the opening of one of the Inferior Doors of the Palace, out of which comes Electra and a train of Trojan Captive-maidens carrying urns of libations, all with dishevelled hair and the well-known gestures proper to Sepulchral rites. They descend (with the exception of Electra) the Orchestra-staircase, and perform a Choral Ode with funeral rhythm and gestures. Orestes and Pylades, recognizing them, stand aside. 19

SEPULCHRAL ODE AS CHORUS-ENTRY

in three Strophes, Antistrophes, and an Epode,

describes in words the tearings of cheeks, rending of garments, and groans, which are actually the gestures of their dance, and are proper to a Sepulchral-rite such as they have been sent to perform by their Queen, terrified as she has been by a dream the night before, a dream signifying how the Dead were wroth with those that slew them. But the Chorus like not this graceless deed of grace: what ransom can be found for the overthrow of the lord of a house? with him Awe has been overthrown, and Fear takes its place, or yet more Success is God. 53

Yet stroke of Vengeance swift
Smites some in life's clear day;
For some who tarry long their sorrows wait
In twilight dim, on darkness' borderland;
And some an endless night
Of nothingness holds fast.

Yes: for blood once spilt, for the marriage tie defiled, there is no remedy—yet the Chorus must, as part of their bitter captive lot, perform the rite they have no heart in. 75

Through this Ode Electra, who ought to have taken the lead, has stood on the stage irresolute: she now addresses the Chorus, who at her word fall into their Episode positions.

EPISODE I

Electra puts to the Chorus the same difficulty they have been feeling:

What shall I say as these funereal gifts
I pour? How shall I speak acceptably?
How to my father pray? What? shall I say
"I bring from loving wife to husband loved
Gifts"—from my mother? No, I am not bold
Enough for that, nor know I what to speak,
Pouring this chrism on my father's tomb:
Or shall I say this prayer, as men are wont,
"Good recompense make thou to those who bring
These garlands," yea, a gift full well deserved
By deeds of ill? Or dumb, with ignominy
Like that with which he perished, shall I pour
Libations on the earth, and like a man
That flings away the lustral filth, shall I
Throw down the urn and walk with eyes not turned? 97

The Chorus-Leader breaking ranks to lay her hand on the Sepulchre as sign of fidelity, advises to throw off all disguise and pray boldly for friend and against foes. Electra in this sense offers the Prayer: setting forth the wrongs of the house and praying for Orestes and Vengeance; then calling on the Chorus for a Sepulchral Song she descends to the tomb. 144

Sepulchral Pean of short Strophe and Antistrophe: for these libations' sake may the curse be averted—yet who strong enough to come as Averter: while Electra is pouring the libations on the tomb. 157

Electra returns to Stage, her whole manner changed: as if the prayer had already begun to be fulfilled, she has found the mysterious locks which, she bit by bit lets out, must be those of Orestes—the Chorus, like sailors in a storm, can only invoke the gods: if the day has come, from a small seed a mighty trunk may grow—Electra then discovers foot-prints [as if leading from the Side Stage-door to the Orchestra-staircase] of two travelers; one foot-print agrees with her brother's: 203

Orestes and Pylades come forward: recognition and joy, Electra hardly believing. She addresses him by four-fold name: as father dear,

The love I owe my mother turns to thee,
My sister's too that ruthlessly was slain,
And thou wast ever faithful brother found.

Orestes compares his family to an eagle's brood orphaned by the spoiler. Electra catching at the omen of eagle, dear bird of Zeus who will avenge his own—Chorus are afraid that their noisy joy may be overheard and ruin all—Orestes has no fear of ruin after the strong oracles of Apollo that bade him come under terrible penalties if he disobeyed: 261

Leprous sores that creep
All o'er the flesh, and as with cruel jaws
Eat out its ancient nature, and white hairs
On that foul ill to supervene: and still
He spake of other onsets of the Erinnyes,
As brought to issue from a father's blood;
For the dark weapon of the Gods below
Winged by our kindred that lie low in death,
And beg for vengeance, yea, and madness too,
And vague, dim fears at night disturb and haunt me,

Seeing full clearly, though I move my brow
In the thick darkness . . . and that then my frame
Thus tortured should be driven from the city
With brass-knobbed scourge: and that for such as I
It was not given to share the wine-cup's taste,
Nor votive stream in pure libation poured;
And that my father's wrath invisible
Would drive me from all altars, and that none
Should take me in or lodge with me: at last,
That loathed of all and friendless I should die,
A wretched mummy, all my strength consumed.
Must I not trust such oracles as these?

297

The Chorus, breaking into lyrics, feel that Justice has at last taken their side: then follows an elaborate

KOMMOS OR LYRIC CONCERTO

by Orestes, Electra and Chorus, in highly intricate and interwoven Strophes and Antistrophes, with funereal gesture. The jaws of flame do not reduce the corpse to senselessness; they can hear below this our Rite and will send answer—what a fate was Agamemnon's, not that of the warrior who dies leaving high fame at home and laying strong and sure his children's paths in life, but to be struck down by his own kin! But there is a sense of Vengeance being at hand, Erinnyes and the Curses of the slain; they make the heart quiver: the Dirge crescendoes till it breaks into the 'Arian rhythm,' a foreign funeral rhythm with violent gestures (proper to the Chorus as Asiatics); and so as a climax breaks up into two semi-choruses: one sings of woe, the other of vengeance, and then the formal Dirge terminates and the Blank verse recommences.

469

In a composed frame (and in Blank Verse) *Orestes and Electra* repeat the distinct prayer for Vengeance and the death of *Ægisthus* and then address themselves to the means. *Orestes* enquires as to the meaning of the Sepulchral-rites, and the dream is narrated, which he interprets as good omen.

Orest. And have ye learnt the dream, to tell it right?
Chor. As she doth say, she thought she bare a snake.
Orest. How ends the tale, and what its outcome then?
Chor. She nursed it, like a child, in swaddling clothes.
Orest. What food did the young monster crave for then?
Chor. She in her dream her bosom gave to it.
Orest. How 'scaped her breast by that dread beast unhurt?
Chor. Nay, with the milk it sucked out clots of blood.
Orest. Ah, not in vain comes this dream from her lord.
Chor. She, roused from sleep, cries out all terrified,
And many torches that were quenched in gloom
Blazed for our Mistress' sake within the house.
Then these libations for the dead she sends,
Hoping they'll prove good medicine of ills.
Orest. Now to earth here, and my sire's tomb I pray,
They leave not this strange vision unfulfilled.
So I expound it that it all coheres;
For if, the self-same spot that I left leaving,
The snake was then wrapt in my swaddling clothes,
And sucked the very breast that nourished me,
And mixed the sweet milk with a clot of blood,

517

And she in terror wailed the strange event,
So must she, as that monster dread she nourished,
Die cruel death: and I, thus serpentised,
Am here to slay her, as this dream portends;
I take thee as my dream-interpreter.

They rapidly arrange their plan to appear as Foreigners, and get admission to the Palace, or, if *Ægisthus* come out, strike him down at once—with a prayer to *Apollo* *exeunt Electra, Orestes, and Pylades by the Distance Side-door.*

575

CHORAL INTERLUDE I

in four Strophes and Antistrophes.

Monsters and woes are many, but most terrible of all is a passion-driven woman: *Thestias*, who burnt out the mystic brand that measured her son's life; *Scylla*, who robbed her father of his life-charm; another—but the woman who slew her warrior-chief it is meet for me to pass over in silence. Then there is the great Lemnian Crime, foremost of all crimes: yet this might well be compared to it; and as that race perished, so is judgment at hand here; the anvil-block of Vengeance firm is set, and Fate is swordsmith hammering; in due time the debt of guilt is paid.

639

EPISODE II

Enter by the Distance Side-door Orestes, Pylades, and attendants, and advance to the Central Door.

Orestes calls loudly for admission, telling the slave who opens that he is a traveller, and must do his message to those within ere night falls; to a lady if a lady rules, though a lord is seemlier. *Enter Clytemnestra*, who gives a formal offer of hospitality (having noticed his irreverent tone), and to whom he bluffly gives a message from a fellow traveller, who learning he was bound for Argos, begged him to seek out *Orestes'* kinsmen and give the news of his death. *Clytemnestra* affects a burst of grief; the curse has taken another victim as he was disentangling himself from the net. *Orestes* regrets he cannot hope for the welcome of those who bear good news. *Clytemnestra* (with a dim feeling of suspicion) assures him he shall want for nothing 'that is fitting,' orders *Orestes* to be led one way, and the rest another, and goes to call *Ægisthus* 'and friends.' *Exeunt Clytemnestra by Left Inferior Door to the Women's Quarters, Orestes and Porter through Central and Pylades, etc., through Right Inferior Door.* *Chorus*, in marching rhythm, catch the touch of suspense, and invoke *Hermes* and the Spirit of Persuasion for *Orestes*.

720

Enter from Women's Quarters, Cilissa, Orestes' Nurse, bidden to seek Ægisthus, as the stranger looks like one meaning to cook some ill. She is in tears at the death of her boy, and details all the petty cares she had over his helpless infancy, and how they are now all profitless.

Chor. And how equipped then doth she bid him come?
Nurse. How? Speak again that I may better learn.
Chor. By spearmen followed, or himself alone?
Nurse. She bids him bring his guards with lances armed.
Chor. Nay, say not that to him thy lord doth hate,
But bid him 'come alone,' (that so he hear
Without alarm), 'full speed, with joyous mind,
Since 'secret speech with messenger goes best.'
Nurse. And art thou of good cheer at this my tale?
Chor. But what if Zeus will turn the tide of ill?

753

Nurse. How so? Orestes, our one hope is gone.
Chor. Not yet; a sorry seer might know thus much.
Nurse. What say'st thou? Know'st thou aught besides my tale?
Chor. Go tell thy message; do thine errand well:
 The Gods for what they care for, care enough.
Nurse. I then will go, complying with thy words:
 May all, by God's gift, end most happily! 769
Exit Nurse by Right Side Door, signifying neighborhood.

CHORAL INTERLUDE II

in four interwoven Strophes and Antistrophes, with Mesode,

invokes the Gods the house had worshipped. Zeus, Father of the Gods, the twin-brothers, Apollo in his glorious shrine at Delphi, Hermes who is the conductor of enterprises: the dear son of the house is harnessed to the car of calamity, moderate its pace—and may Murder cease to breed new Murder. But the Avenger, like Perseus, must not look on the deed as he does it; as she calls the name Mother let him hurl back the cry of Father. 820

EPISODE III

Ægisthus entering from the Right Side Door (of Neighborhood) speaks of this summons; it may after all be women's fears 'that leap up high and die away to nought.' The *Chorus* say there is nothing like asking. *Æg.* will do so: they cannot cheat a man with his eyes open. *Exit through Central Door.* 839

Chorus, in short lyric burst, mark critical moment that decides success or failure. 853

Then cries from within, and Porter rushes from Central Door to Door of Women's Quarters (Left Inferior), loudly summoning Clytæmnestra, and when she appears informs her 'the dead are slaying the living.' She sees in a moment the truth, and is looking hurriedly for aid, when enter, from Central Door, Orestes, joined at once by Pylades and Attendants, from Right Inferior.

Orest. 'Tis thee I seek: he there has had enough. 878
Clytam. Ah me! my loved Ægisthus! Art thou dead?
Orest. Lov'st the man? Then in the self-same tomb
 Shalt thou now lie, nor in his death desert him.
Clytam. [baring her bosom] Hold, boy! Respect this breast of mine,
 my son,
 Whence thou full oft, asleep, with toothless gums,
 Hast sucked the milk that sweetly fed thy life.
Orest. What shall I do, my Pylades? Shall I
 Through this respect forbear to slay my mother?
Pyl. Where, then, are Loxias' other oracles,
 The Pythian counsels, and the fast-sworn vows?
 Have all men hostile rather than the gods.
Orest. My judgment goes with thine; thou speakest well.
 [To Clytæmnestra.] Follow: I mean to slay thee where he lies,
 For while he lived thou held'st him far above
 My father. Sleep thou with him in thy death,
 Since thou lov'st him, and whom thou should'st love hatest.
Clytam. I reared thee, and would fain grow old with thee.
Orest. What! Thou live with me, who did'st slay my father?
Clytam. Fate, O my son, must share the blame of that.
Orest. This fatal doom, then, it is Fate that sends.

Clytam. Dost thou not fear a parent's curse, my son?
Orest. Thou, though my mother, did'st to ill chance cast me.
Clytam. No outcast thou so sent to house allied.
Orest. I was sold doubly, though of free sire born.
Clytam. Where is the price, then, that I got for thee?
Orest. I shrink for shame from pressing that charge home.
Clytam. Nay, tell thy father's wantonness as well.
Orest. Blame not the man that toils when thou'rt at ease.
Clytam. 'Tis hard, my son, for wives to miss their husband.
Orest. The husband's toil keeps her that sits at home.
Clytam. Thou seem'st, my son, about to slay thy mother.
Orest. It is not I that slay thee, but thyself.
Clytam. Take heed, beware a mother's vengeful hounds.
Orest. How, slighting this, shall I escape my father's?
Clytam. I seem in life to wail as to a tomb.
Orest. My father's fate ordains this doom for thee.
Clytam. Ah me! The snake is here I bare and nursed.
Orest. An o'er-true prophet was that dread dream-born.
 Thou slowest one thou never should'st have slain,
 Now suffer fate should never have been thine. 916

Exeunt Orestes and Pylades, forcing Clytæmnestra through the Central Door, their attendants remaining to guard the door. Chorus, after a word of pity for even this 'twain mischance,' break into

CHORAL INTERLUDE III

in three interwoven Strophes and Antistrophes.

Late came vengeance on Troy, late now has it blest this heaven-sent exile, and our Master's house is freed. On a lover of the war of guile has Revenge come subtle-souled, Vengeance who

Is guileful without guile,
 Halting of foot and tarrying over-long;
 The will of Gods is strangely over-ruled,
 It may not help the vile.

At last we see the light. All-working Time with cleansing rites will purify the house; Fortune's throws shall fall with gladsome cast: at last we see the light. 959

EXODUS OR FINALE

Enter from Main Door Orestes and Pylades, their Attendants bearing the Corpses, and the net in which Agamemnon had been murdered.

Orestes solemnly declares that they have perished as murderers; they swore to live and die together and they have kept the oath. He bids the Attendants stretch out in full light of the Sun, the great Purifier, the fatal net, as pledge that he did his dread deed only as deed of necessary vengeance—he dwells on the cruel device—but Chorus seeing side by side the net and the slaughter by which it has been avenged, can think of nothing but the woe which its avenger by his deed of vengeance must bring on himself. Orestes reiterates the crime of which this deed is the reminder. The Chorus cannot help repeating the unhappy omen. 1009

At this very moment Orestes changes and begins to feel the oncoming madness—while reason yet stays with him he repeats his innocence and puts on the suppliant's fillet, with which he will go to Delphi, and challenge the God who sent him on the errand to free him from its dire consequences. Madness increases, and he can see the Furies in bodily shape dark-robed,

and all their long tresses entwined with serpents. In rapid dialogue the Chorus bid him cling to the idea of Apollo, and he *bursts away through Distance Door on Left* to commence his long career of wanderings. The Chorus conclude :

Here, then, upon this palace of our kings
 A third storm blows again ;
 The blast that haunts the race has run its course.
 First came the wretched meal of children's flesh ;
 Next what befel our king :
 Slain in the bath was he who ruled our host,
 Of all the Achæans lord ;
 And now a third has come, we know not whence,
 To save . . . or shall I say,
 To work a doom of death ?
 Where will it end ? Where will it cease at last,
 The mighty Ate dread,
 Lulled into slumber deep ?

THIRD PLAY: AFTERNOON:

THE GENTLE GODDESSES

EUMENIDES*

The Scene represents the Oracle of Delphi: the Central Doors being the Gate of the 'Adytum,' or Innermost shrine. From the left Inferior Door enter the Priestess of the Oracle, who stands in front of the Central Gate, to offer the Morning Prayer.

PROLOGUE

The Priestess's Prayer enumerates the Deities who have connection with the Ancient Oracle, how Apollo is its main guardian, after it has passed through many hands ; other Deities have a share in it, even Zeus the Supreme Accomplisher. Praying that her divinations that day may excel even her past, she calls on the Pilgrims to come as the lot permits. 28

Exit through the Main Gate into the Inner Shrine. In a moment she returns, pale and disordered, flinging wide open the Central Gates, through which can dimly be discerned dreadful forms in the Inner Shrine.

She can hardly stand for the terror of the sight she has seen ; the sacred shrine polluted by the presence of a man in suppliant garb, bunch of olives and tufts of wool, his sword yet reeking with a recent murder ; and sitting round about him yet more dreaded beings.

A troop 46
 Of women strange to look at sleepeth there
 Before this wanderer, seated on their stools ;
 Not women they, but Gorgons I must call them ;
 Nor yet can I to Gorgon forms compare them ;
 I have seen painted shapes that bear away
 The feast of Phineus. Wingless, though, are these,
 And swarth, and every way abominable.
 They snort with breath that none may dare approach,
 And from their eyes a loathsome humour pours,
 And such their garb as neither to the shrine
 Of Gods is meet to bring, nor mortal roof.
 Ne'er have I seen a race that owns this tribe,
 Nor is there land can boast it rears such brood,
 Unhurt and free from sorrow for its pains.
 Henceforth be it the lot of Loxias,
 Our mighty lord, himself to deal with them :
 True prophet-healer he, and portent-seer,
 And for all others cleanser of their homes. 63

At her word, in the entrance of the Inner Shrine appears Apollo with Hermes, and they lead Orestes out.

*Euphemism for the Furies, as the popular name ' Good neighbours ' for Mischievous Fairies.

Apollo will never fail his suppliant; it is he who has sent sleep on these loathly Beings, born out of evils, with whom neither Gods nor men hold intercourse. They will still pursue, but he must fly to the ancient City of Pallas and clasp her statue; there 'judges of these things' and 'a means' will be found to rid him of his evils. Orestes expresses confidence in Apollo's justice, who reiterates his pledge in the name of Zeus and commits the wanderer to the charge of his own brother Hermes, the Escort-God, to take him safe to Athens.

93

Apollo disappears into his shrine, and Hermes and Orestes leave by the Left side or Distance-door. The stage being thus left vacant, the machinery of the roller-stage brings the interior of the cave to the front: showing the sleeping Furies scattered over the floor. The Ghost of Clytemnestra rises in front of the entrance to the Inner Shrine.

Clytem. What ho! Sleep on! What need of sleepers now?

And I am put by you to foul disgrace
Among the other dead, nor fails reproach
Among the shades that I a murderess am;
And so in shame I wander, and I tell you
That at their hands I bear worst forms of blame.
And much as I have borne from nearest kin,
Yet not one god is stirred to wrath for me,
Though done to death by matricidal hands.
See ye these heart-wounds, whence and how they came?
Yea, when it sleeps, the mind is bright with eyes;
But in the day it is man's lot to lack
All true discernment. Many a gift of mine
Have ye lapped up, libations pure from wine,
And soothing rites that shut out drunken mirth;
And I dread banquets of the night would offer
On altar-hearth, at hour no god might share.
And lo! all this is trampled under foot.
He is escaped, and flees, like fawn, away,
And even from the midst of all your toils
Has nimbly slipped, and draws wide mouth at you.
Hear ye; for I have spoken for my life;
Give heed, ye dark, earth-dwelling goddesses,
I, Clytemnestra's phantom, call on you.

100

[The Erinnyes moan in their sleep.

Moan on, the man is gone, and flees far off:
My kindred find protectors; I find none.

Moan as before.

Too sleep-oppressed art thou, nor pitiest me:
Orestes, murderer of his mother, 'scapes.

[Noises repeated.

Dost snort? Dost drowse? Wilt thou not rise and speed?
What have ye ever done but work out ill?

[Noises as before.

Yea, sleep and toil, supreme conspirators,
Have withered up the dreaded dragon's strength.

Chorus of Furies, starting up suddenly with a yell.

Seize him,

125

Seize, seize, yea, seize: look well to it.

Clytem. Thou, phantom-like, dost hunt thy prey and criest,
Like hound that never rests from care of toil.

What dost thou? (To one Erinnyes.) Rise and let
not toil o'ercome thee,

Nor, lulled to sleep, lose all thy sense of loss.

Let thy soul (to another) feel the pain of just reproach:

The wise of heart find that their goad and spur.

And thou (to a third) breathe on him with thy
blood-flecked breath,

And with thy vapour, thy maw's fire, consume him;

Chase him, and wither with a fresh pursuit.

Leader of the Chor. Wake, wake, I say; wake her, as I wake thee.

Dost slumber? Rise, I say, and shake off sleep.

Let's see if this our prelude be in vain.

134

The Furies start up and (still on the roller-stage) perform a Fury
Dance for Prelude in three short Strophes and Antistrophes.

Our prey is gone! Apollo, ever known as a robber-god, has now delivered a matricide from his due doom. Even in my dreams a feeling of reproach stung me as a whip. Such are the doings of these 'younger gods.' See Earth's Central Shrine is stained with blood, and Apollo has taken sides with a mortal against a god; but though the god may vex them, the culprit shall not escape.

169

Apollo, re-appearing from the Inner Shrine, threatens the Furies with his bow. He bids them leave his Sacred precincts and seek scenes more fitted to them.

There where heads upon the scaffold lie,
And eyes are gouged and throats of men are cut,
Where men are maimed and stoned to death, and groan
With bitter wailing 'neath the spine impaled.

A stichomuthic contest ensues; the Furies reproach Apollo with taking the part of a matricide. He urges she had first slain her husband—they retort that husband is not kin, to which Apollo pleads the sanctity of the marriage tie; this authorized by the great example of Zeus and Hera, with its special patroness Cypris, this "assigned by Fate and guided by the Right is more than any oath." Neither party will give way; Apollo appeals to Pallas as Umpire, the Furies declare they will never desist from the pursuit.

225

CHANGE OF SCENE

By the turning of the periacti and other mechanical changes the scene is shifted to the familiar Acropolis of Athens itself, the open Central Doors being arranged to represent the Porch of the Temple of 'Athene, Guardian of the City.' Enter by Distance side-door Orestes, who advances to the Centre and clasps the Statue of Pallas.

226

Orestes has come as suppliant, but no longer with the stain of blood on his hands; that during his long wanderings has been by due rites washed away.

Suddenly by the same door the Furies enter upon the Stage, their faces to the ground and tracking Orestes' steps.

235

Chorus of Furies: they have been long off the track, at last the 'dumb informer' is clear again, already they catch the loved scent of blood.—There he is clasping in confidence the statue of the Goddess, but watch, he escapes not: no trial, as he hopes, for the matricide; his own blood they must suck from his living members, and when they have had their fill of this drink undrinkable they will drag him down alive to bear the fate of a matricide. Orestes not yet perceiving them continues his prayer: long experience

has taught him the various cleansing rites, and they have all been paid; he has dwelt amongst men and no impurity has been brought on them; this and all-cleansing Time show that the stain of matricide is removed, and with pure hands he can clasp Athene, queen of this land, and pledge the Argive alliance for her City [*one of the political hits of the piece*] if she will befriend him. *The Furies suddenly spring up:* Not Apollo nor Athene can save thee from thy doom! *Orestes clings convulsively to the Statue.* Thou resistest? then feel our spell!

296

Chanting in marching rhythm they rapidly descend the Orchestra staircase, form about the Altar and then proceed to

CHORAL SPELL (FOR ENTRY ODE)

in four Strophes and Antistrophes.

Strophe I

O Mother who didst bear me, mother Night,
A terror of the living and the dead,
Hear me, oh hear!
The son of Leto puts me to disgrace
And robs me of my spoil,
This crouching victim for a Mother's blood:
And over him as slain,
We raise this chant of madness, frenzy-working,
The hymn the Erinnyes love,
A spell upon the soul, a lyreless strain
That withers up men's strength.

Antistrophe I

This lot the all-pervading destiny
Hath spun to hold its ground for evermore,
That we should still attend
On him on whom there rests the guilt of blood
Of kin shed causelessly,
Till earth lie o'er him; nor shall death set free.
And over him as slain,
We raise this chant of madness, frenzy-working,
The hymn the Erinnyes love,
A spell upon the soul, a lyreless strain,
That withers up men's strength.

328

Strophe II

Such lot was then assigned us at our birth:
From us the Undying Ones must hold aloof:
Nor is there one who shares
The banquet-meal with us;
In garments white I have nor part nor lot;
My choice was made for overthrow of homes,
Where home-bred slaughter works a loved one's death:
Ha! hunting after him,
Strong though he be, 'tis ours
To wear the newness of his young blood down.

Antistrophe II

Since 'tis our work another's task to take,
The Gods indeed may bar the force of prayers

Men offer unto me,
But may not clash in strife;
For Zeus doth cast us from his fellowship,
"Blood-dropping, worthy of his utmost hate."
For leaping down as from the topmost height,
I on my victim bring
The crushing force of feet,
Limbs that o'erthrow e'en those that swiftly run, 35
An Atë hard to bear.

Strophe III

And fame of men, though very lofty now
Beneath the clear, bright sky,
Below the earth grows dim and fades away
Before the attack of us, the black-robed ones,
And these our dancings wild,
Which all men loathe and hate.

Antistrophe III

Falling in frenzied guilt, he knows it not;
So thick the blinding cloud
That o'er him floats; and Rumour widely spread
With many a sigh reports the dreary doom,
A mist that o'er the house
In gathering darkness broods. 358

Strophe IV

Fixed is the law, no lack of means find we;
We work out all our will,
We, the dread Powers, the registrars of crime,
Whom mortals fail to soothe,
Fulfilling tasks dishonoured, unrevered,
Apart from all the Gods,
In foul and sunless gloom,
Driving o'er rough steep road both those that see,
And those whose eyes are dark.

Antistrophe IV

What mortal man then doth not bow in awe
And fear before all this,
Hearing from me the destined ordinance
Assigned me by the Gods?
This task of mine is one of ancient days;
Nor meet I here with scorn,
Though 'neath the earth I dwell,
And live there in the darkness thick and dense,
Where never sunbeam falls. 374

EPISODE I

Enter in her Chariot [along the balcony of the permanent scene] Athene.

Athene has heard far off *Orestes'* cry, and has come in her swift chariot. What is this strange presence in her own city, and who is this suppliant? The *Chorus*, in parallel dialogue, explain who they are, and seek to enlist *Athene* against the matricide; but *Athene* answers she has only heard one side. *Chorus* rejoin that the adversary dares not rest his case on oath for

oath [political allusion to procedure of ordinary Athenian Courts]; *Athene* thinks that a poor way of getting at truth, and as *Chorus* express confidence in her judgment she calls on *Orestes*; he details again all the rites of purification he has gone through, and how *Apollo* bade him do the deed. *Athene* pauses: Murder stirred by wrath [*i. e.*, homicide as distinguished from murder, the special province of the Court of *Areopagus*] is too much for mortal or even herself to decide; but she hereby appoints jurors on oath [the special distinction of the *Areopagus*] as a perpetual institution for dealing with such cases. Let the parties prepare, she will return soon with the best of her citizens [observe, the Court was an Aristocratic Court] as Jurors. 467

CHORAL INTERLUDE

in four Strophes and Antistrophes.

Unless the right cause gains here there will be an outbreak of new laws, general recklessness, and woes of slain kindred with no Furies to avenge. Awe is good as watchman of the soul, and calm Wisdom gained by sorrow; it is not the lawless life that is to be praised, but from the soul's true health comes the fair fortune, loved of all mankind and aim of many a prayer. He who reveres not the High Altar of Justice, but dareth and transgresseth all, will, perforce, as time wears on, have to take in sail.

When trouble makes him hers, and each yard-arm
Is shivered by the blast,

and in vain he struggles mid the whirling waves, ever failing to weather round the perilous promontory till he is wrecked on the reefs of Vengeance.

535

CHANGE OF SCENE

to Mars' Hill. Enter Athene, followed by Herald and Twelve Citizens.

EXODUS, OR FINALE

Athene bids the Herald sound a summons, for the whole city is to learn the laws she makes for all time to come. *Apollo* enters above. The *Chorus* challenging his right, *Apollo* declares himself Witness and Advocate for *Orestes*. 551

The Proceedings from this part are exactly modelled on those of the Court of the Areopagus. The *Chorus* called on to open, cross-examine *Orestes* in stichomuthic dialogue, who admits the deed, and pleads justification that she slew his father. *Cho.* rejoin she has been paid by death, *Orestes* still lives. Why, then, *Orestes* enquires, did they not pursue her while alive? *Chorus* rest on plea that hers was not kindred blood. On this *Orestes* joins issue and appeals to *Apollo*. He answers: Though the Jurors are on oath, yet *Zeus* gave the oracle, and he is mightier than any oath.—*Cho.* What, *Zeus* take a matricide's part?—*Apollo* details the base manner of *Agamemnon's* murder.—*Cho.* taunt *Apollo* that *Zeus* himself rose by imprisoning his father.—*Apollo* rejoins that imprisonment is remediable, but blood once spilt can never be brought back.—*Cho.* appeal to impossibility of restoring such a criminal to the house he has polluted.—Then *Apollo* puts forth the essence of his case (in a subtle plea which would delight the litigious Athenians): the mother is only the nurse, the father is the true parent; as proof here is *Pallas* sprung from a Father without any Mother; none can be shown born without Father. 650

Both parties join issue, and then (amidst intense political excitement) *Athene* delivers the Inauguration Address of the Court of the *Areopagus*.

Athene. Hear ye my order, O ye Attic people,
In act to judge your first great murder-cause.

And henceforth shall the host of *Ægeus'* race
For ever own this council-hall of judges:
And for this *Ares'* hill, the *Amazon's* seat
And camp when they, enraged with *Theseus*, came
In hostile march, and built as counterwork
This citadel high-reared, a city new,
And sacrificed to *Ares*, whence 'tis named
As *Ares'* hill and fortress: in this, I say,
The reverent awe its citizens shall own,
And fear, awe's kindred, shall restrain from wrong
By day, nor less by night, so long as they,
The burghers, alter not themselves their laws:
But if with drain of filth and tainted soil
Clear river thou pollute, no drink thou'lt find.
I give my counsel to you, citizens,
To reverence and guard well that form of state
Which is nor lawless, nor tyrannical,
And not to cast all fear from out the city;
For what man lives devoid of fear and just?
But rightly shrinking, owning awe like this,
Ye then would have a bulwark of your land,
A safeguard for your city, such as none
Boast or in *Skythia's* or in *Pelops'* clime.
This council I establish pure from bribe,
Reverend, and keen to act, for those that sleep
An ever-watchful sentry of the land. 676

After a rapid stichomuthic interchange of promises and threats by the two parties the voting is proceeded with, *Athene* first giving her casting vote, in case of equality, to *Orestes*, as preferring the male cause. [This was a political allusion to the 'vote of *Athene*' or custom of the *Areopagite* Court to give the casting vote to the accused.] The votes are counted, found equal, and *Athene* declares *Orestes* acquitted.—*Orestes*, in a burst of gratitude, declares his *Argive* people shall always be firm friends with the people of Athens: [Political hit.] 747

The Chorus breaking into Strophic Lyrics vow vengeance and long train of ills on the city for this, *Athene* (in blank verse) propitiating them, and pleading that the cause has been fairly tried. Moreover they would lose all the good things the city will do for them if friendly, offering them a house in its midst. Gradually the *Chorus* calm down, and having (in parallel dialogue) gained a repeated promise from *Athene* they change their tone and (in Strophic Lyrics) promise all good to the land, *Athene* making acknowledgment on behalf of the city (in marching rhythm as signifying exultation). Finally *Athene* offers to conduct them at once to their homes, the cave-chapels where the *Eumenides* were worshipped.

Enter on the stage an array of Matrons and Girls in festal robes, as worn in the rites of the Furies, now called Eumenides or 'Gentle Goddesses' [thus spectacular effect with which Æschylus loved to conclude]. They, with Athene, chanting the Ritual hymn, file down into the Orchestra, and so lead the Chorus out in the direction of the Shrines of the Eumenides.

THE ELECTRA OF SOPHOCLES*

Scene Mycenæ; the Stage and Orchestra arranged to represent the Market Place, Portico of a Temple in the Centre; Inferior door on one side is the gate to Palace of Ægisthus and Clytæmnestra, that on the other leads to the tomb of Agamemnon; Side-scene on one side gives a view of Argos. Enter from Distance side-door Orestes, Pylades and Attendant.

PROLOGUE

The aged *Attendant* points out to Orestes Argos, the Grove of Io, the Temple and other details of the Scene; it was just here he received Orestes as a boy when his father was slain and bore him to a place of safety; now the long wished for day of vengeance is come. *Orestes* acknowledges his long fidelity; relates how Phœbus has sent him with this oracle:

That I myself unarmed with shield or host 36
Should subtly work the righteous deed of blood,

and details his plan: the *Attendant*, whose age will save him from recognition, shall announce the death of Orestes, while Orestes and Pylades shall perform the rites enjoined at his father's tomb; then, when the wrong-doers believe themselves secure, the Avenger will easily gain admittance. [*At this moment a woman's wail is heard within.*] Orestes wonders if it may be his own Electra and would stop, the *Attendant* hurries him away to do the God's behest. 85

Exeunt Orestes and Pylades on left to Tomb of Agamemnon; Attendant back through the Distance side-door. Enter from Palace Electra moaning and weeping.

MONODY

Electra in Lyric Monody. The light, the air, the loathed house and bed she sleeps on, all are witnesses of her ceaseless misery and woe, orphaned as she is of a father foully slain. She calls on the Curses, the Furies and other dread Powers who watch over evil slaughter to send Orestes, she can no longer bear up with sorrow's great burden cast into the balance. 120

Enter by the Orchestral door Chorus of Argive Maidens to condole with Electra.

LYRIC CONCERTO (for PARODE)

Cho. Why mourn for even the guileful slaughter of thy Father, accursed deed? *Electra*: I know your kind and tender friendship, yet will never be dissuaded.—*Cho.* Yet what groans and prayers can raise thy sire from the doomed pool of Hades? you go from woes bearable to woes beyond bearing. *Elec.* It is weak to forget parents so lost; rather for me the nightingale that ever wails 'Itys,' or Niobe weeping in stone.—*Cho.* Thou art not the only one who feels sorrow: there are thy sisters, and another now mourning in a youth obscure, but who will one day return to save. *Elec.*—Ah! him I yearn for, but he mocks my messages, and promises yet never comes.—*Cho.*

* The quotations of Sophocles are (mostly) from Plumptre's translation.

Take heart: Time is a calm and patient deity; trusting in Zeus you will find neither Orestes nor the God of Acheron forgetful. *Elec.* Yet meanwhile the larger portion of my life is gone; orphaned, un-wed, an alien stranger I serve in the house where I was wont to reign.—*Cho.* Ah! that sad day! Guile devised the blow and lust struck it! *Elec.* Oh, most horrible day, most horrible night! the foul banquet! the dread forms of death he met with at their accursed hands, he who was my life!—*Cho.* But take care: excess of grief makes you utter what may bring you into trouble. *Elec.* I know, but will never cease from uttering woe on woe: leave me, I am beyond soothing, and will never pause to count my tears.—*Cho.* It is with pure good will, as if a mother, I beg you not to heap ills on ills. *Elec.* Is misery limited? is it noble to neglect the dead? if they escape without penalty fear of the Gods will be swept from the earth. 250

EPISODE I

Chorus now changing to Blank Verse. We meant well, but do as you will, we will follow you. *Elec.* I am indeed ashamed; but remember the trouble I am in: to be hated by my mother, house-mate with my father's murderers; with Ægisthus sitting on my father's throne by day and pouring libations on the hearth he violated; my mother not living in fear of the Erinnyes, but making a red-letter day of the day my father died: I, alas! keep his birth day in solitary feast. I am bitterly chidden when caught weeping, and threatened when news comes of Orestes: all hope is far.—Ægisthus is from home, or she dared not have indulged her grief even thus far. 327

Enter her sister, Chrysothemis, bearing funeral offerings. She remonstrates with Electra for uselessly wailing, instead of adapting herself to her fate. *Elec.* retorts that she has learned her lesson by rote. She advises to hate when there is strength to back hatred, yet she will not join in working revenge. Electra covets not her choice of ease and wealth, and to be called her mother's child, while it is open to her to be her father's! *Cho.* moderates: each may learn something from the other. *Chrysoth.* is accustomed to Electra's want of charity and would not now have accosted her except to warn her of new evils: they mean to get her out of the country and shut up in a dungeon where she shall never see the light of day.—A rapid stichomuthic dialogue follows as to temporizing and resisting, and then *Chrys.* is going to do her errand. *Elec.* enquires what this is, and learns that Clytæmnestra, disturbed by a dream, is sending propitiatory libations.

A rumor ran

417

That she had seen our father's presence come
(Yes, thine and mine) a second time to light,
And then that he upon the hearth stood up,
And took the sceptre which he bore of old,
Which now Ægisthus bears, and fixed it there,
And from it sprang a sucker fresh and strong,
And all Mycenæ rested in its shade.
This tale I heard from some one who was near
When she declared her vision to the Sun;
But more than this I heard not, save that she
Now sends me hither through that fright of hers.

Electra catching a gleam of hope, adjures her to disobey, and in place of Clytæmnestra's offerings to put on the tomb their own: Electra's own withered lock and untrimmed girdle; and instead of propitiatory prayer pray to send Orestes. *Cho.* approves and *Chrysothemis* catches the spirit and exits. 471

CHORAL INTERLUDE I

in Strophe, Antistrophe and Epode.

If my mind misleads me not, Vengeance is coming with hands that bear the might of Righteousness; a new courage springs through my veins at these propitious dreams, that Agamemnon will not forget for aye, nor the axe that slew him. She too is coming, Erinys shod with brass, dread form with many a foot and many a hand: never will the boding sign come falsely to those who did the deed, or men will find no prophecies in dreams.—Ah dreadful chariot race of Pelops, foundation of all the ills which have never since left the house.

515

EPISODE II

Enter from Palace Clytemnestra and Attendant. Clyt. It is Ægisthus' absence that makes you bold enough to appear outside the Palace and disgrace us. I know your reproaches: but it was Justice, not I, that slew your father; what right had he to slay *my* child, born of my travails, and not some other Argive children, Menelaus's for example, whose the quarrel was? Had Hades a special lust to feed on my children?—*Elec.* This time at least it is not I who begin. I could reply if permitted.—*Clyt.* permits.—*Elec.* You admit the monstrous admission, that you slew your husband—for justice sake? or for the 'coward base' who is your paramour? You well know that the offence for which Artemis demanded the sacrifice was Agamemnon's slaughter of the Sacred Stag, and from his seed therefore the atonement must come which so unwillingly he made. And if not, is your plea blood for blood? then you will be the first to suffer. How can you plead thus while living in open guilt with him who slew your husband? It is a cruel mistress, not a mother, I revile: you charge me with rearing Orestes as minister of vengeance, I would indeed if I had strength! So proclaim me a monster, that will make me a fitting daughter of my mother.—*Chor.* Here is passion rather than care to speak right.—*Clyt.* Thus to show scorn for her mother! she will go all lengths and feel no shame.—*Elec.* Shame I do feel, but the deeds which beget the shame are yours.—*Clyt.* By Artemis, you shall pay for this when Ægisthus comes!—*Elec.* I thought I had leave to speak.—*Clyt.* Will you not be silent and let me perform my rites without disorder?—*Elec.* Now I am silent (*Retires*).—*Clyt.* then proceeds to offer her gifts to Phœbus, with prayer to avert the ill omen of the past night: as her prayer "is not amongst friends," she can allude but darkly to all she means, but He is a God and will understand all she leaves unsaid.

659

Enter by the Distance-door Attendant of Orestes.

Enquiring of Chorus he finds he is arrived before the people he is seeking, and announces to Clytemnestra that Orestes is dead. *Electra* utters a wail of agony, while *Clyt.* asks for particulars. Then follows the regular 'Messenger's Speech,' a detailed and graphic account of a chariot race, in which he was thrown and killed. *Clyt.* trembles between joy at deliverance from her suspense, and a touch of motherly feeling; still she triumphs over the now hopeless *Electra*: for him, what is well.

Elec. Hear this, thou Power avenging him who died!*Clyt.* Right well she heard, and what she heard hath wrought.

The Messenger is taken in to the Palace, *Electra* left to wail without, with attempt of Chorus to condole (*lyric concerto*).

870

Enter from Tomb of Agamemnon Chrysothemis jubilant and bearing a lock of hair of Orestes.

She eagerly insists that Orestes is come; shows the lock and describes the libations that no other would pour on that tomb. Bit by bit *Electra* checks her joy, and informs her of the news. They mourn together, till *Electra* breaks out with proposal, that since their friends are snatched from them, and they two are left alone, they shall themselves work their revenge; that will be the safest and will bring glory: 'the sisters twain who saved their father's house.' *Chor.* This requires consideration. *Chry.* Will you never learn that you are a woman and not a man? *Elec.* then declares she will do it herself, and after a stichomuthic contest *exit Chrysothemis*.

1057

CHORAL INTERLUDE II

In two Strophes and Antistrophes.

The storks show a pattern of filial piety: why do not men follow it? By Zeus and Themis there is a punishment for the unfilial; may the voice crying for vengeance reach the sons of Atreus below! Their house is full of woe; *Electra*, alone faithful, is ready to face death if only she may destroy the twin furies. The great and good will purchase glory with life; so may'st thou prevail and gain the name of the best of daughters.

1096

EPISODE III

Enter from Distance-door Orestes, Pylades, and Attendants.

Orestes informs the Chorus, and *Electra* as one of the household, that they bear the urn containing the ashes of Orestes, whose death they had sent forward a messenger to announce. *Electra* begs to clasp the urn and pours over it a flood of grief; here is nothingness to represent the dear boy she sent out in bloom of youth; and all her forethought has perished! And he died amid strangers without her to take part in the funeral rites! All her sweet toil in nursing him with more than mother's love is gone! All is gone—father, mother, brother! She would go too; they ever shared an equal lot; now let her go to him, ashes to ashes!

1170

Chor. Thou, O *Electra*, take good heed, wast born
Of mortal father; mortal, too, Orestes,
Yield not too much to sorrow.

Ores. [*Trembling.*] Woe is me.
What shall I say? Ah, whither find my way,
In words that have no issue? for I fail
In strength to curb my speech.

Elec. What sorrow now
Disturbs thee? Wherefore art thou speaking thus?

Ores. Is this *Electra's* noble form I see?*Elec.* That self-same form indeed, in piteous case.*Ores.* Alas, alas, for this sad lot of thine.*Elec.* Surely thou dost not wail, O friend, for me!*Ores.* O form most basely, godlessly misused.

Elec. Thy words, ill-omened, fall, O friend, on none
But me alone.

Ores. Alas, for this thy state,
Unwedded, hopeless.

Elec. Why, O friend, on me
With such fixed glance still gazing dost thou groan?

Ores. How little knew I of my fortune's ills!*Elec.* What have I said to throw such light on them?

Ores. Now that I see thee thus, with many woes
Clothed as a garment.

Elec. Yet thou dost but see
A few of all my evils.
Ores. What could be
More sad than these to look on ?
Elec. This, to live
And sit at meat with murderers.
Ores. With whose ?
What evil dost thou indicate by this ?
Elec. My father's ; 'tis to them, against my will
I live in bondage.
Ores. Who constrains thee, then ?
Elec. My mother she is called ; and yet in nought
Is she what mother should be.
Ores. In what acts ?
By blows and stripes, or this unseemly life ?
Elec. Both blows, unseemly life, and all vile deeds.
Ores. And is there none to help ? Not one to check ?
Elec. No, none. Who was . . . thou buryest him as dust.
Ores. O sad one ! How I pitied thee long since.
Elec. Know, then, thou art the only pitying one.
Ores. For I alone am hurt by these thy woes. 1200
Elec. Surely thou dost not come by line of blood
Connected with us.
Ores. I could tell thee all,
Were these thy friends.
Elec. Most friendly are they ; speak
As unto faithful hearers.
Ores. Put away
That urn awhile that thou may'st hear the whole.
Elec. Ah ! By the Gods, O stranger, ask not that.
Ores. Do what I bid thee, and thou shalt not err.
Elec. Now, by thy beard, deprive me not of that
I hold most dear.
Ores. I say it cannot be.
Elec. Ah me, Orestes, wretched shall I be,
Bereaved of this thy tomb.
Ores. Hush, hush such words ;
Thou has no cause for wailing.
Elec. Have no cause !
Do I not wail my brother, who is dead ?
Ores. Thou hast no call to utter speech like this.
Elec. And am I so dishonoured by the dead ?
Ores. By none art thou dishonoured. But this thing
Is nought to thee.
Elec. And yet it needs must be,
If 'tis Orestes's body that I bear.
Ores. Except in show of speech it is not his.
Elec. Where, then, is that poor exile's sepulchre ?
Ores. Of those that live there is no sepulchre. 1219
Elec. What say'st thou, boy ?
Ores. No falsehood what I say.
Elec. And does he live ?
Ores. He lives, if I have life.
Elec. What, art thou he ?
Ores. Look thou upon this seal,
My father's once, and learn if I speak truth,

Elec. O blessed day !
Ores. Most blessed, I too own.
Elec. O voice ! And art thou come ?
Ores. No longer learn
That news from others.
Elec. And I have thee here,
Here in my grasp !
Ores. So may'st thou always have me.
Elec. O dearest friends, my fellow-citizens,
Look here on this Orestes, dead indeed
In feigned craft, and by that feigning saved.
Chor. We see it, daughter ; and at what has chanced
A tear of gladness trickles from our eyes. 1231
A passionate dialogue (*in mixed verse* : *Electra* speaking lyrics, *Orestes* blank
verse) of exultation and weeping succeeds : when finally Orestes, is calling
back their thoughts to the plans of vengeance, when *enter from Palace At-*
tendant of Orestes, who chides them for their loud joy, which he has barely
been able to prevent from reaching the ears of Clytæmnestra. *Electra* is in-
formed who this attendant is, and joyfully recognizes him and calls him
father for his faithfulness. He cuts conversation short and hurries Orestes
and Pylades within. *Electra* with a prayer retires. 1383

CHORAL INTERLUDE III

Short expression of the sense of a critical moment : *Strophe*, Ares and the
Avengers are on their way—*Antistrophe*, they have passed beneath the roof-
tree. 1397

EXODUS OR FINALE

Electra rushes out to stand on guard against *Ægisthus* while vengeance is
being done on Clytæmnestra.—Cries from within ; *Electra* and *Chorus* per-
ceive that the deed is done.—Enter *Orestes* and *Pylades* from the Palace red-
handed ; they are about to triumph when *Electra* thrusts them back, for
Ægisthus is at hand.—Enter *Ægisthus* enquiring for the strangers of *Electra*. 1442

Ægis. Where are the strangers, then ? Tell this to me.
Elec. Within ; for they have found a loving hostess.
Ægis. And did they say distinctly he was dead ?
Elec. Ah no ! they showed it, not in words alone.
Ægis. And is it here, that we may see it plain ?
Elec. 'Tis here, a sight most pitiful to see.
Ægis. Against thy wont thou giv'st me cause for joy.
Elec. Thou may'st rejoice, if this be ground of joy.
Ægis. I bid you hush, and open wide the gates
That all of Argos and Mycenæ see,
So if there be that once were lifted up
With hopes they had, vain hopes they fixed on him,
Now seeing him dead, they may receive my curb,
And finding me their master, sense may gain
Without coercion.
Elec. And that end is reached
By me ; for I by time have wisdom gained,
To yield to those more mighty.

*The doors are thrown open, and disclose Orestes and Pylades stand-
ing by the dead body of Clytæmnestra, which is covered with a sheet
and a veil over the face.*

- Ægis.* Lo, I see,
O Zeus, a sight that comes right well for me,
(Without offence I say it; should it move
The wrath divine, I wish it all unsaid.)
Withdraw the veil which hides the face, that I
To kindred blood may pay the meed of tears.
- Ores.* Do thou uplift it. 'Tis thy task not mine,
To look on this, and kindly words to speak.
- Ægis.* Thou giv'st good counsel, and I list to thee,
And thou, if yet she tarries in the house,
Call Clytæmnestra.
- Ores.* (as *Ægisthus* lifts the veil) Here she lies before thee,
Seek her not elsewhere.
- Ægis.* Oh what sight is this!
- Ores.* Whom fearest thou? Who is't thou dost not know?
- Ægis.* Into whose snares, whose closely-tangled mesh
Have I, poor victim, fallen?
- Ores.* Saw'st thou not
Long since that thou didst speak to them that live
As they were dead?
- Ægis.* Ah me! I catch thy words.
It needs must be that he who speaks to me
Is named Orestes.
- Ores.* Wert thou then deceived,
Thou excellent diviner?
- Ægis.* Woe is me!
I perish, yet permit me first to speak
One little word.
- Elec.* Give him no leave to speak,
By all the gods, my brother, nor to spin
His long discourse. When men are plunged in ills
What gain can one who stands condemned to die
Reap from delay? No, slay him out of hand;
And, having slain him, cast him forth, to find
Fit burial at their hands from whom 'tis meet
That he should have it, far away from view.
Thus only shall I gain a remedy
For all the evils of the years gone by.
- Ores.* [To *Ægisthus*.] Go thou within, and quickly.
Now our strife
Is not of words, but for thy life itself.
- Ægis.* Why dost thou force me in? If this be right,
What need of darkness? Why not slay at once?
- Ores.* Give thou no orders, but where did'st slay
My father go, that thou too there may'st die.
- Ægis.* Truly the doom is fixed, this house should see
The ills that on the house of Pelops fall,
Or present, or to come.
- Ores.* Yes, those that fall
On thee: of these I am a prophet true.
- Ægis.* Thou boastest of a skill which he had not
Thy father.
- Ores.* Still thou bandiest many words,
And length'nest out the way. Move on.
- Ægis.* Lead thou.
- Ores.* Not so, thou must go first.

1474

- Ægis.* Dost think I'll flee?
- Ores.* Thou must not die the death thou would'st desire.
I needs must make it utter. Doom like this
Should fall on all who dare transgress the laws,
The doom of death. Then wickedness no more
Would multiply its strength.
- Chor.* O seed of Atreus, after many woes,
Thou hast come forth, thy freedom hardly won,
By this emprise made perfect!

THE ELECTRA OF EURIPIDES *

PROLOGUE

The Scene is in front of a Peasant's Cottage: the Centre is the door of the Cottage, the scene on the two sides of it represents the way to different fields. Time: early Morning, the stars still shining.

Enter from the Cottage the Peasant on his way to his day's work. In the form of a Morning Prayer to the stream Inachus, he makes known the situation of affairs, the murder of Agamemnon, etc.—and in particular how Ægisthus, fearing lest some nobleman might marry Electra and be her avenger, had forced her into wedlock with himself, a peasant, honest but in the lowest poverty. But he is too good a friend to his master's house and to the absent Orestes to wrong Electra; he has been a husband only in name, to give her the shelter of his humble roof. *Enter Electra from the Cottage with a watering pot:* not seeing the Peasant she in a similar soliloquy announces that she is on her way to the river to prosecute her unnatural toil.

Peas. Why will thou thus, unhappy lady, toil
For my sake bearing labours, nor desist
At my desire? Not thus hast thou been train'd.
Elec. Thee equal to the gods I deem my friend,
For in my ills thou hast not treated me
With insult. In misfortunes thus to find
What I have found in thee, a gentle pow'r,
Lenient of grief, must be a mighty source
Of consolations. It behoves me then
Far as my pow'r avails, to ease thy toils,
That lighter thou may'st feel them, and to share
Thy labour, though unbidden; in the fields
Thou hast enough of work; be it my task
Within to order well. The lab'rer tired
Abroad, with pleasure to his house returns.
Accustom'd all things grateful there to find.

Peas. Go then, since such thy will; nor distant far
The fountain from the house. At the first dawn
My bullocks yoked I to the field will drive,
And sow my furrows; for no idle wretch
With the gods always in the mouth can gain
Without due labour the support of life.

95

Stage vacant a moment. Then enter by Distance-door Orestes and Pylades.

Orestes in conversation with his friend makes known he is come by Divine command to avenge his father's death: he has fulfilled the god's first charge to present offerings on his father's tomb; the second is that he must not enter the walls of the city; thus he wishes to find his sister—now, as

*The quotations of Euripides are from Potter's translation.

hears, wedded to a peasant!—and consult—they step aside as they see one whom 'female slave her tresses show' approaching. 127

Re-enter Electra with her water-pot filled: and in a *Monody* (*strophe, antistrophe and epode*) laments her situation: laments for her lost father, her brother afar off, in servitude it may be: and adjures her father's spirit to send vengeance. 187

PARODE JOINING ON TO EPISODE I

Enter the Orchestra Chorus of Maidens of Mycenæ, and in dialogue (two Strophes and Antistrophes) beg Electra to join them in an approaching festival, as she had been wont in happier days.—Electra declares she is fit for tears and rags, not for festivities.—As for rags they will find her the festal robes; and vows, instead of tears may gain the goddess's help.—No God, says Electra, has an ear for the wretched, and in wretched toil and obscure retreat her life is wasting away.—A sob from the concealed Orestes startles them, and they are about to flee, when Orestes and Pylades discover themselves and reassure them. With difficulty he restrains his emotions through-out a long conversation, personating a messenger from himself to Electra.

Ores. Bearing thy brother's words to thee I come. 251
Elec. Most welcome: breathes he yet this vital air?
Ores. He lives: I first would speak what brings thee joy.
Elec. Oh be thou blest for these most grateful words!
Ores. To both in common this I give to share.
Elec. Where is th' unhappy outcast wand'ring now?
Ores. He wastes his life not subject to one state.
Elec. Finds he with toil what life each day requires?
Ores. Not so; but mean the wand'ring exile's state.
Elec. But with what message art thou from him charg'd?
Ores. T' inquire, if living, where thou bear'st thy griefs.
Elec. First then observe my thin and wasted state.
Ores. Wasted with grief, so that I pity thee.
Elec. Behold my head, its crisped honours shorn.
Ores. Mourning thy brother, or thy father dead?
Elec. What can be dearer to my soul than these?
Ores. Alas! What deem'st thou are thy brother's thoughts?
Elec. He, though far distant, is most dear to me.
Ores. Why here thy dwelling from the city far?
Elec. O, stranger, in base nuptials I am join'd—
Ores. I feel thy brother's grief!—To one of rank?
Elec. Not as my father once to place me hop'd—
Ores. That hearing I may tell thy brother, speak.
Elec. This is his house: in this I dwell remote.
Ores. This house some digger or some herdsman suits.
Elec. Generous, though poor, in reverence me he holds.
Ores. To thee what reverence doth thy husband pay?
Elec. He never hath presumed t' approach my bed.

The conversation is prolonged, bringing out for the benefit of the Strangers and the Chorus the whole of Electra's troubles, and how her father's blood is crying for vengeance.

Elec. The monarch's tomb
Unhonoured, nor libations hath receiv'd,
Nor myrtle bough, no hallow'd ornament

Hath dignified the pyre. Inflamed with wine,
My mother's husband, the illustrious lord,
For so they call him, trampled on the earth
Insultingly where Agammon lies,
And, hurling 'gainst his monument a stone,
Thus taunts us with proud scorn, "Where is thy son,
"Orestes where? right noble is thy tomb
"Protected by his presence." Thus he mocks
The absent; but, O stranger, tell him this
Suppliant I beg thee.

371

Enter unexpectedly the Peasant. On hearing that these strangers are messengers from Orestes, he instantly calls for refreshments to be brought, and begs the stranger to delay no longer to enter the cottage: poverty must be no excuse for not offering what hospitality he has.—A burst of admiration is drawn from Orestes.

400

Ores. Nature hath giv'n no outward mark to note
The generous mind; the qualities of men
To sense are indistinct. I oft have seen
One of no worth a noble father shame,
And from vile parents worthy children spring,
Meanness oft grov'ling in the rich man's mind,
And oft exalted spirits in the poor.
How then discerning shall we judge aright?
By riches? ill would they abide the test.
By poverty? on poverty awaits
This ill, through want it prompts to sordid deeds.
Shall we pronounce by arms? but who can judge
By looking on the spear the dauntless heart?
Such judgment is fallacious; for this man,
Nor great among the Argives, nor elate
With the proud honours of his house, his rank
Plebeian, hath approv'd his liberal heart.
Will you not then learn wisdom, you whose minds
Error with false presentments leads astray?
Will you not learn by manners and by deeds
To judge the noble? Such discharge their trust
With honour to the state and to their house.
Mere flesh without a spirit is no more
Than statues in the forum; nor in war
Doth the strong arm the dang'rous shock abide
More than the weak; on nature this depends
And an intrepid mind. But we accept
Thy hospitable kindness; for the son
Of Agamemnon, for whose sake we come,
Present or not is worthy to this house.
Go, my attendants, I must enter it;
This man, though poor, more cheerful than the rich
Receives me; to his kindness thanks are due.
More would it joy me if thy brother, blest
Himself, could lead me to his prosperous house:
Yet haply he may come; th' oracular voice
Of Phcebus firmly will be ratified:
Lightly of human prophecies I deem.

438

[*Orestes and his attendants enter the house.*]

Electra is in a quandary at the idea of people of such rank being invited into her humble cottage.

Peasant. Why not? If they are noble, as their port
Denotes them, will they not alike enjoy
Contentment, be their viands mean or rich?

The only device *Electra* can think of is to send to an old servant of her father's house—the same who, as Tutor, preserved the child Orestes on the fatal night—now an aged herdsman forced to hide himself in obscurity, and ask him to help them in this emergency. *Exit Peasant to the fields to find the old Tutor; Electra into the cottage.*

474

CHORAL INTERLUDE I

apostrophises the array of ships that went to the Trojan War, the great chiefs who commanded, especially Achilles, whose shield they have seen, with its Gorgons, and Sphinxes, and Hermes in flight, and other wondrous figures—suddenly at the end connects itself with the subject of the play by the thought: it was the Prince who commanded heroes like these that a wicked wife dared to slay!

530

EPISODE II

Enter from the fields the Aged Tutor, tottering under the weight of a kid and other viands, clad in rags, and in tears. *Electra* wonders why he weeps: to mourn for Agamemnon or Orestes is surely now to mourn in vain.

Tut. In vain; but this my soul could not support; 553
For to his tomb as on the way I came,
I turned aside, and falling on the ground,
Alone and unobserved, indulg'd my tears;
Then of the wine, brought for thy stranger guests,
Made a libation, and around the tomb
Plac'd myrtle branches; on the pyre I saw
A sable ewe, yet fresh the victim's blood,
And clust'ring auburn locks shorn from some head;
I marvell'd, O my child, what man had dar'd
Approach the tomb, for this no Argive dares.
Perchance with secret step thy brother came
And paid these honors to his father's tomb.
But view these locks, compare them with thine own,
Whether like thine their color; nature loves
In those who from one father draw their blood
In many points a likeness to preserve.

Elec. Unworthy of a wise man are thy words,
If thou canst think that to Mycenæ's realms
My brother e'er with secret step will come,
Fearing Ægisthus. Then between our locks
What can th' agreement be? To manly toils
He in the rough Palæstra hath been train'd,
Mine by the comb are soften'd; so that hence
Nothing may be inferr'd. Besides, old man,
Tresses like-color'd often may'st thou find
Where not one drop of kindred blood is shar'd.

Tut. Trace but his footsteps, mark th' impression, see
If of the same dimensions with thy feet.

Elec. How can th' impression of his foot be left
On hard and rocky ground? But were it so,

- Brother and sister never can have foot
Of like dimensions : larger is the man's.
- Tut.* But hath thy brother, should he come, no vest
Which thou wou'dst know, the texture of thy hands,
In which when snatch'd from death he was array'd?
- Elec.* Know'st thou not, when my brother from this land
Was saved, I was but young? But were his vests
Wrought by my hands, then infant as he was,
How could he now in his maturer age
Be in the same array'd, unless his vests
Grew with his person's growth? No, at the tomb
Some stranger, touch'd with pity, sheared his locks,
Or native, by the tyrant's spies unmark'd.
- Tut.* Where are these strangers? I would see them : much
Touching thy brother wish I to inquire.
- Elec.* See, from the house with hast'ning step they come.

599

Re-enter Orestes and Pylades: Conversation in which the aged Tutor eyes him curiously all over, and declares he is Orestes—general recognition and burst of joy.—Then they turn to vengeance, and in stichomuthic dialogue lay their plans. Ægisthus, the Tutor says, is to come to a neighboring field to celebrate a sacrifice; they lay a plan for Orestes and Pylades to gain admission as travellers and kill him in the moment of sacrifice. As to Clytæmnestra: a report is prevalent in the palace that Electra has given birth to a child; they conspire to give currency to the report and invite Clytæmnestra to perform the ten days' rite: once in the house, Orestes will do the dreadful deed; they tremble at their horrid tasks, but their father must be avenged.—*Exeunt Orestes and his Attendants to the fields; and Electra to the Cottage* begging the Chorus, who are privy to all this as confidential friends, to keep watch and summon her if news comes.

763

CHORAL INTERLUDE II

- Strophe 1.* The Argive mountains round,
'Mongst tales of ancient days
From age to age recorded this remains :
Tuned to mellifluous lays,
Pan taught his pipe to sound,
And as he breath'd the sprightly-swelling strains,
The beauteous ram, with fleece of gold,
God of shepherds, on he drove.
The herald from the rock above
Proclaims, "Your monarch's wonders to behold,
"Wonders to sight, from which no terrors flow,
"Go, Mycenæans, to th' assembly go."
With reverence they obey the call,
And fill th' Atridæ's spacious hall.
- Antis.* Its gates with gold o'erlaid,
Wide oped each Argive shrine,
And from the altar hallow'd flames arise;
Amidst the rites divine,
Joying the Muse to aid,
Breath'd the brisk pipe its sweet notes to the skies;
Accordant to the tuneful strain
Swell'd the loud acclaiming voice,
Now with Thyestes to rejoice :
He, all on fire the glorious prize to gain,

- With secret love the wife of Atreus won,
And thus the shining wonder made his own;
Then to the assembly vaunting cried,
"Mine is the rich Ram's golden pride."
Then, oh then, indignant Jove
Bade the bright sun backward move,
And the golden orb of day,
And the morning's orient ray;
Glaring o'er the Western sky
Hurl'd his ruddy lightnings fly;
Clouds, no more to fall in rain,
Northward roll their deep'ning train;
Libyan Ammon's thirsty seat,
Wither'd with the scorching heat,
Feels nor show'rs nor heavenly dews
Grateful moisture round diffuse.
- Strophe 2.*
- Antis. 2.* Fame hath said (but light I hold
What the voice of fame hath told)
That the sun, retiring far,
Backward roll'd his golden car;
And his vital heat withdrew,
Sick'ning man's bold crimes to view.
Mortals, when such tales they hear,
Tremble with an holy fear,
And th' offended gods adore;
She, this noble pair who bore,
Dar'd to murder, deed abhorrd!
This forgot, her royal lord.

815

EPISODE III

As the Ode is concluding, shouts are heard from the direction of the field where the sacrifice is: Chorus summon Electra.

After a brief conversation, a Messenger arrives breathless, and after rapidly giving the news that Ægisthus has fallen, is encouraged to tell the scene at length, which he does in the regular 'Messenger's Speech.'

- Mess.* Departing from this house, the level road
We enter'd soon, mark'd by the chariot wheel
On either side. Mycenæ's noble king
Was there, amidst his gardens with fresh streams
Irriguous walking, and the tender boughs
Of myrtles, for a wreath to bind his head,
He cropt; he saw us, he address'd us thus
Aloud: Hail, strangers; who are ye, and whence
Come, from what country? Then Orestes said,
Thessalians; victims to Olympian Jove
We at the stream of Alpheus go to slay.
The King replied, Be now my guests, and share
The feast with me; a bullock to the Nymphs
I sacrifice; at morn's first dawn arise,
Then shall you go; but enter now my house.
Thus as he spoke, he took us by the hand
And led us, nothing loth: beneath his roof
Soon as we came, he bade his slaves prepare
Baths for the strangers, that, the altars nigh,

845

Beside the lustral ewers they might stand.
 Orestes then, With lavers from the pure
 And living stream we lately have been cleansed :
 But with thy citizens these rites to share,
 If strangers are permitted, we, O King,
 Are ready to thy hospitable feast,
 Nothing averse. The converse here had end.
 Their spears, with which they guard the king, aside
 Th' attendants laid, and to their office all
 Applied their hands; some led the victim, some
 The baskets bore, some rais'd the flames and plac'd
 The cauldrons on the hearth; the house resounds.
 Thy mother's husband on the altars cast
 The salted cakes, and thus address'd his vows :
 Ye Nymphs that haunt the rocks, these hallow'd rites
 Oft let me pay, and of my royal spouse
 Now absent, both by fortune blest as now;
 And let our foes as now, in ruin lie;
 Thee and Orestes naming. But my Lord,
 Far other vows address'd, but gave his words
 No utterance, to regain his father's house.
 Ægisthus then the sacrificing sword
 Took from the basket, from the bullock's front
 To cut the hair, which on the hallow'd fire
 With his right hand he threw; and, as his slaves
 The victim held, beneath its shoulder plung'd
 The blade; then turning to thy brother spoke :
 Among her noble arts Thessalia boasts
 To rein the fiery courser, and with skill
 The victim's limbs to sever; stranger, take
 The sharp-edg'd steel and show that fame reports
 Of the Thessalians truth. The Doric blade
 Of temper'd metal in his hand he grasp'd,
 And from his shoulders threw his graceful robe;
 Then to assist him in the toilsome task
 Chose Pylades, and bade the slaves retire :
 The victim's foot he held, and its white flesh,
 His hand extending, bared, and stript the hide
 E'er round the course the chariot twice could roll,
 And laid the entrails open. In his hands
 The fate-presaging parts Ægisthus took,
 Inspecting: in the entrails was no lobe;
 The valves and cells the gall containing show
 Dreadful events to him, that view'd them, near.
 Gloomy his visage darken'd; but my lord
 Ask'd whence his sadden'd aspect: He replied —
 Stranger, some treachery from abroad I fear;
 Of mortal men Orestes most I hate,
 The son of Agamemnon; to my house
 He is a foe. Wilt thou, replied my lord,
 King of this state, an exile's treachery dread?
 But that, these omens leaving, we may feast,
 Give me a Phthian for this Doric blade,
 The breast asunder I will cleave. He took
 The steel and cut. Ægisthus, yet intent,
 Parted the entrails; and, as low he bow'd

His head, thy brother, rising to the stroke,
 Drove through his back the ponderous axe, and riv'd
 The spinal joints: his heaving body writh'd
 And quiver'd, struggling in the pangs of death.
 The slaves beheld, and instant snatched their spears,
 Many 'gainst two contesting; but my lord
 And Pylades with dauntless courage stood
 Oppos'd, and shook their spears. Orestes then
 Thus spoke: I come not to this state a foe,
 Nor to my servants; but my father's death
 I on his murderer have aveng'd; you see
 Th' unfortunate Orestes: kill me not,
 My father's old attendants. At these words
 They all restrain'd their spears, and he was known
 By one grown hoary in the royal house.
 Crowns on thy brother's head they instant plac'd
 With shouts of joy. He comes, and with him brings
 Proof of his daring, not a Gorgon's head,
 But whom thou hat'st, Ægisthus: blood for blood,
 Bitter requital, on the dead has fall'n.

939

General exultation (*in Lyric measures*) succeeds, which increases as
Orestes and Pylades re-enter bearing the corpse of Ægisthus. After brief cele-
 bration of the deed the face of the corpse is uncovered, and Electra, gazing
 at it, gives vent to her scorn and hatred: how he had slain a hero, made her
 an orphan, lived in shame with her mother, enjoying and trusting in her
 father's wealth: but

Nature is firm, not riches: she remains
 For ever, and triumphant lifts her head.
 But unjust wealth, which sojourns with the base,
 Glitters for some short space, then flies away.

His effeminate manners are more than maiden tongue may speak of; beauty
 graced his perfect form:

But be not mine a husband, whose fair face
 In softness with a virgin's vies, but one
 Of manly manners; for the sons of such
 By martial toils are trained to glorious deeds;
 The beauteous only the dance give grace.

Let the wicked in future learn they are not secure till the goal of life is
 reached.

1092

Clytæmnestra is then seen approaching: they hurry Orestes in; his heart
 fails him at the thought of his mother; with difficulty Electra rouses him to
 his appointed vengeance. [*Exeunt all but Electra into the Cottage. Enter*
Clytæmnestra in a Chariot and splendid array.] The Chorus welcome her,
 and she begs their aid to alight.—*Electra* thrusts herself forward clad in
 rags as she is, and begs that she too may assist.—*Clyt.* feels the impropriety
 of the scene, and falls into an apologetic tone; it was *Electra's* father who,
 by his injustice to *Iphigenia*, was the real cause of *Electra's* trouble. This
 leads to the usual judicial disputation: *Clyt.* pleading that this sacrifice of
 her daughter was done not for a good cause, but for the wanton *Helen*; this
 sacrifice she had avenged, and to avenge it must join an enemy, not a friend,
 of *Agamemnon*.—*Electra*, after getting permission, replies: *Helen* not the
 only wanton one of her family; if no motive but vengeance, why begin to
 adorn as soon as *Agamemnon* was out of the way, why rejoice whenever the

Trojans prospered, why go on to persecute Orestes and herself, nay, why not slay Ægisthus for persecuting these her children? The sight of Electra's miserable condition makes even *Clyt.* feel compunction: she has been too harsh, she will be kinder now, and so shall Ægisthus—Electra replying to all that it is too late. At last *Clyt.* prepares to go within the house and perform the rite for Electra; then she will join her husband. *Exeunt Attendants with Chariot, and Electra ushers Clytemnestra into the Cottage.*

Let my poor house receive thee; but take heed
Lest thy rich vests the blackening smoke defiles.—
There shalt thou sacrifice, as to the gods
Behoves thee sacrifice: the basket there
Is for the rites prepared, and the keen blade
Which struck the bull; beside him shalt thou fall
By a like blow; in Pluto's courts his bride
He shall receive, with whom in heav'n's fair light
Thy couch was shared: to thee this grace I give,
Thou vengeance for my father shalt give me.

1274

CHORAL INTERLUDE III

The waves of mischief are flowing back, the gale of Violence is veering:
Vengeance for the crime of old standing is come at last.

1298

EXODUS, OR FINALE

Cries are heard from within: the Chorus know that the deed is done.

By the machinery of the roller-stage the interior of the Cottage is displayed, with Orestes and Electra standing over the corpse of Clytemnestra.

A revulsion of feeling has come over them: they did the deed in frenzy; now, instead of triumph, they have no thoughts but for the act they have done, and how they will carry a curse with them ever after, and all will shun them. With horror they recall the details of the scene:

Ores. Didst thou see her when she drew
Her vests aside, and bared her breasts, and bow'd
To earth her body whence I drew my birth,
Whilst in her locks my furious hand I wreath'd?

1338

Elec. With anguish'd mind, I know, thou didst proceed,
When heard thy wailing mother's piteous cries.

Ores. These words, whilst with her hands she strok'd my cheeks,
Burst forth, "Thy pity I implore, my son;"
Soothing she spoke, as on my cheeks she hung,
That bloodless from my hand the sword might fall.

Chor. Wretched Electra, how could'st thou sustain
A sight like this? How bear thy mother's death,
Seeing her thus before thine eyes expire?

Ores. Holding my robe before mine eyes, I rais'd
The sword and plung'd it in my mother's breast.

Elec. I urged thee to it, I too touch'd the sword.

Chor. Of deeds most dreadful this which thou hast done.
Cover thy mother's body; in her robes
Decent compose her wounded limbs.—Thou gav'st
Being to those who were to murder thee.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Suddenly over the Permanent Scene two Supernatural Beings appear and move along, recognized by the Chorus as Castor and Pollux, the Family Deities.

1364

Hear, son of Agamemnon: for to thee
Thy mother's brothers, twin-born sons of Jove
Castor, and this my brother Pollux, speak.
Late, having calmed the ocean waves, that swell'd
The lab'ring vessel menacing, we came
To Argos, where our sister we beheld,
Thy mother, slain: with justice vengeance falls
On her; in thee unholy is the deed.
Yet Phœbus, Phœbus—but, my king is he;
I will be silent: yet, though wise, he gave
To thee response not wise; but I must praise
Perforce these things. Thou now must do what Fate
And Jove decree.

Electra is to marry Pylades, and Orestes to flee to Athens and be purified by the Court on the Hill of Mars: Apollo assisting. Orestes' future life is foretold [thus working out various details of the Orestes legends].—With awe Orestes, Electra, and Chorus enter into converse with the gods, and the word is confirmed. They failed to avert the trouble from their house on account of dire Fate and 'the voice unwise of Phœbus from his shrine.' There has been a Demon hostile to Electra's parents.—Then the brother and sister's thoughts turn to the life-long separation, and the painful wandering sorrows e'en to the gods mournful to hear. Farewell to Argos: the Gods hurry Orestes away for the Furies are already on his track, and conclude:

To the impious thro' the ethereal tract
We no assistance bring: but those to whom
Justice and sanctity of life is dear,
We from their dangerous toils relieve and save.
Let no one then unjustly will to act,
Nor in one vessel with the perjured sail:
A god to mortals this monition gives.

Chor. Oh, be you blest! And those, to whom is given
Calmly the course of mortal life to pass,
By no affliction sunk, pronounce we blest.

THE ALCESTIS OF EURIPIDES*

MEMORANDUM

Of the Story as it would be traditionally familiar to the Audience before-hand.—Admetus was the splendid King of Pheræ, so famous for the sacred rites of Hospitality that he had Sons of the Gods for Guests, and the God of Brightness, Apollo, himself while he sojourned on earth chose Admetus's household to dwell in. In the full tide of his greatness the time came for him to die: Apollo interposed for his chief votary, and won from the Fates that he might die by substitute. But none was found willing to be the victim, not even his aged parents: at last Alcestis his wife, young and bright as himself, gave herself for her husband and died. Then another Guest-Friend of Admetus came to the rescue, Jupiter's own son Hercules, and by main force wrested Alcestis from the grasp of Death, and restored her to her husband.

PROLOGUE

Scene: Pheræ in Thessaly. The early morning sunshine blazes full on the Royal Palace of the Glorious Admetus, and on the statues, conspicuous in front of it, of Jupiter Lord of Host and Guest, and Apollo: nevertheless the Courtyard is silent and deserted.—At last Apollo himself is seen, not aloft in the air as Gods were wont to appear, but on the threshold of the Central Gate.

APOLLO meditates on his happy associations with the house he is quitting. How when there was trouble in heaven, and he himself, for resisting Jove's vengeance on the Healer Æsculapius, was doomed to a year's slavery amongst mortal men, he had bound himself as herdsman to Admetus, and Admetus exercised his lordship with all reverence:

A holy master o'er his holy slave. 13

How again when trouble came to Admetus he had saved him from the day of death, on condition that another would die in his stead.

His friends, his father, e'en the aged dame 19
That gave him birth were asked in vain: not one
Was found, his wife except.

The dreadful day has come, and Alcestis is at this moment breathing her last in the arms of her husband: and he himself must leave his loved friend, for Deity may not abide in the neighborhood of death's pollution. 27

Suddenly, the hideous Phantom of Death becomes visible, ascending the Steps of the Dead [from below the Orchestra on to the Stage]: his pace never flags, yet he covers like all things of darkness, before the Bow of Apollo.

* The quotations are from Potter's Translation, in Routledge's Universal Library, freely altered in parts for the purpose of bringing out changes of metre, etc., in the original. The References are to the numbering of the lines in Potter.

Death reproaches Apollo with haunting the dwellings of mortals, and with seeking by that Bow of his to defraud the Infernal Powers of their due. Apollo defends himself: he is but visiting friends he loves: he has no thought of using force. But would he could persuade Death to choose his victims according to the law of nature, and slay ripe lingering age instead of youth!

Death. Greater my glory when the youthful die! 58

Apollo appeals to self-interest: more sumptuous obsequies await the aged dead.—That, answers Death, were to make laws in favor of the rich.—Apollo condescends to ask mercy for his friend as a favor; but favors, Death sneers, are not in keeping with his manners; and taunts Apollo with his helplessness to resist fate. The taunt rouses Apollo to a flash of prophecy (which is one of his attributes), giving (as the Greek stage loved to do) a glimpse into the end of the story.

Apollo. Yet, ruthless as thou art, soon wilt thou cease 67
This contest; such a man to Pheræ's house
Comes. . . . He, in this house
A welcome guest to Admetus, will by force
Take his wife from thee; and no thanks from me
Will be thy due; yet what I now entreat
Then thou wilt yield, and I shall hate thee still.

Apollo moves away and disappears in the distance [by Left Side-door], while Death, hurling defiance after him, waves his fatal sword and crosses the threshold. 81

PARODE, OR CHORUS-ENTRY

Enter the Orchestra [by the Right Archway, as from the neighborhood] the Chorus: Old Men of Pheræ, come to enquire how it is with the Queen on the morning of this appointed day of her death. As usual in such Chorus-Entries their chanting is accompanied with music and gesture-dance to a rhythm traditionally associated with marching. But by a very unusual effect they enter in disordered ranks, moving in two loosely-formed bodies towards the Central Altar.

1st Semichorus. What a silence encloses the Palace!
What a hush in the house of Admetus!
and Semichorus. Not a soul is at hand of the household
To answer our friendly enquiry—
Is it over, all over but weeping?
Or sees she the light awhile longer,
Our Queen, brightest pattern of women
The wide world through,
Most devoted of wives, our Alcestis?

Arriving at the Altar they fall for a time into compact order, and exchange their marching rhythm for the elaborate Choral ritual, the evolutions taking them to the Right of the Orchestra. 89

Strophe

Full Chorus. Listen for the heavy groan,
Smitten breast and piercing moan,
Ringing out that life is gone.
The house forgets its royal state,
And not a slave attends the gate.
Our sea of woe runs high:—ah, mid the waves
Appear, Great Healer, Apollo!

They break again into loose order and marching rhythm, remaining on the Right of the Orchestra.

1st Semi. Were she dead, could they keep such a silence? 94

2nd Semi. May it be—she is gone from the Palace?

1st Semi. Never!

2nd Semi. Nay, why so confident answer?

1st Semi. To so precious a corpse could Admetus

Give burial bare of its honours?

They reunite in Choral order and work back to the Altar.

Antistrophe

Full Chorus. Lo, no bath the porch below, 99
Nor the cleansing fountain's flow,
Gloomy rite for house of woe.
The threshold lacks its locks of hair,
Clipp'd for the dead in death's despair.
Who hears the wailing voice and thud of hands,
The seemly woe of the maidens?

At the Altar they again break up and fall into marching rhythm.

2nd Semi. Yet to-day is the dread day appointed— 105

1st Semi. Speak not the word!

2nd Semi. The day she must pass into Hades—

1st Semi. I am cut to the heart!

I am cut to the soul!

2nd Semi. When the righteous endure tribulation,

Avails nought long-tried love,

Nought is left to the friendly—but mourning!

Accordingly they address themselves to a Full Choral Ode, the evolutions carrying them to the extreme Left of the Orchestra in the Strophe, and in the Antistrophe back to the Altar.

CHORAL INTERLUDE I

Strophe

In vain—our pious vows are vain— 111
Make we the flying sail our care,
The light bark bounding o'er the main;
To what new realm shall we repair?
To Lycia's hallow'd strand?
Or where in solitary state,
Mid thirsty deserts wild and wide
That close him round on every side,
Prophetic Ammon holds his awful seat?
What charm, what potent hand
Shall save her from the realms beneath?
He comes, the ruthless tyrant Death:
I have no priest, no altar more,
Whose aid I may implore!

Antistrophe

O that the Son of Phoebus now 121
Lived to behold th' ethereal light!
Then might she leave the seats below,
Where Pluto reigns in cheerless night!
The Sage's potent art,

Till thund'ring Jove's avenging pow'r
Hurl'd his red Thunders at his breast,
Could, from the yawning gulf releast,
To the sweet light of life the dead restore.
Who now shall aid impart?
To ev'ry god, at ev'ry shrine,
The king hath paid the rites divine:
But vain his vows, his pious care;
And ours is dark despair!

EPISODE I

At last they have been heard, and one of the Queen's Women comes weeping from the Palace [by one of the Inferior Doors]: the Chorus fall into their Episode position, in two ranks, between the Altar and the Stage, taking part by their Foreman in the dialogue.

The Chorus eagerly enquire whether Alcestis yet lives. 138

Attend. As living may I speak of her, and dead.

Cho. Living and dead at once, how may that be?

Attend. E'en now she sinks in death and breathes her last.

They join in extolling her heroic devotion, and the Attendant tells of her bearing on this day of Death, which she celebrates as if a day of religious festival.

When she knew 160
The destin'd day was come, in fountain water
She bath'd her lily-tinctur'd limbs, then took
From her rich chests, of odorous cedar form'd,
A splendid robe, and her most radiant dress;
Thus gorgeously array'd she stood before
The hallow'd flames, and thus address'd her pray'r:
"O Queen, I go to the infernal shades!
Yet, e'er I go, with reverence let me breathe
My last request: Protect my orphan children,
Make my son happy with the wife he loves, 170
And wed my daughter to a noble husband:
Nor let them, like their mother, to the tomb
Untimely sink, but in their native land
Be blest through length'ned life to honour'd age."
Then to each altar in the royal house
She went, and crown'd it, and address'd her vows,
Plucking the myrtle bough; nor tear, nor sigh
Came from her, neither did the approaching ill
Change the fresh beauties of her vermeil cheek.
Her chamber then she visits, and her bed; 180
There her tears flow'd, and thus she spoke: "O bed
To which my wedded lord, for whom I die,
Led me a virgin bride, farewell; to thee
No blame do I impute, for me alone
Hast thou destroy'd; disdaining to betray
Thee and my lord, I die: to thee shall come
Some other woman, not more chaste, perchance
More happy"—as she lay, she kissed the couch;
And bath'd it with a flood of tears; that pass'd,
She left her chamber, then return'd, and oft 190

She left it, oft return'd, and on the couch
Fondly, each time she enter'd, cast herself.
Her children, as they hung upon her robes,
Weeping, she rais'd, and clasp'd them to her breast
Each after each, as now about to die.
Each servant through the house burst into tears
In pity of their mistress; she to each
Stretch'd her right hand; nor was there one so mean
To whom she spoke not, and admitted him
To speak to her again. Within the house 200
So stands it with Admetus. Had he died,
His woes were over: now he lives to bear
A weight of pain no moment shall forget.

Alcestis is wasting away, and fading with swift disease, while her distracted husband holds her in his arms, entreating impossibilities. And now they are about to bring her out, for the dying Alcestis has a longing for one more sight of heaven and the radiant morning. The Chorus are plunged in despair: how will their king bear to live after the loss of such a wife!

The lamentations rise higher still as the Central Gates open and the couch 235
of Alcestis is borne out, Admetus holding her in his arms, and her children clinging about her; the Stage fills with weeping friends and attendants. The whole dialogue falls into lyrical measures with strophic alternations just perceptible. Alcestis commences to address the sunshine and fair scenery she has come out to view—when the scene changes to her dying eyes, and she can see nothing but the gloomy river the dead have to cross, with the boatman ready waiting, and the long dreary journey beyond. Dark night is creeping over her eyes, when Admetus, as he ever mingles his passionate prayers with her wanderings, conjures her for her children's sake as well as his own not to forsake them. A thought for her children's future rouses the mother from her stupor, and she rallies for a solemn last appeal [the measure changing to blank verse to mark the change of tone]. She begins to recite the sacrifice she is making for her lord:

I die for thee, though free 284
Not to have died, but, from Thessalia's chiefs
Preferring whom I pleas'd, in royal state
To have lived happy here—I had no will
To live bereft of thee with these poor orphans—
I die without reluctance, though the gifts
Of youth are mine to make life grateful to me. 290
Yet he that gave thee birth, and she that bore thee,
Deserted thee, though well it had besem'd them
With honour to have died for thee, t' have saved
Their son with honour, glorious in their death.
They had no child but thee, they had no hope
Of other offspring, should'st thou die; and I
Might thus have lived, thou might'st have lived till age
Crept slowly on, nor wouldst thou heave the sigh
Thus of thy wife deprived, nor train alone
Thy orphan children:—but some God appointed 300
It should be thus: thus be it.

All this is the basis for a requital she demands of her husband: that he shall let her children be lords in their own house, and not set over them the cruel guardianship of a step-mother.

My son that holds endearing converse with thee 315
Hath in his father a secure protection;
But who, my daughter, shall with honour guide
Thy virgin years? What woman shalt thou find
New-wedded to thy father, whose vile arts
Will not with slanderous falsehoods taint thy name,
And blast thy nuptials in youth's freshest bloom?
For never shall thy mother see thee led
A bride, nor at thy throes speak comfort to thee,
Then present when a mother's tenderness
Is most alive: for I must die! 325

The Chorus pledge their faith that the king will honour such a request as long as reason lasts. Admetus addresses a solemn vow to his dying wife, that her will shall be done:

Living thou wast mine, 334
And dead thou only shalt be called my wife.

It will be only too easy to keep such a pledge as that, for life henceforth will be one long mourning to him.

Hence I renounce
The feast, the cheerful guest, the flow'ry wreath, 350
And song that used to echo through my house:
For never will I touch the lyre again,
Nor to the Libyan flute's sweet measures raise
My voice: with thee all my delights are dead.
Thy beauteous figure, by the artist's hand
Skillfully wrought, shall in my bed be laid;
By that reclining, I will clasp it to me,
And call it by thy name, and think I hold
My dear wife in my arms, and have her yet, 360
Though now no more I have her: cold delight
I ween, yet thus th' affliction of my soul
I shall relieve, and visiting my dreams
Shalt thou delight me.

O for the power of Orpheus's lyre, that might rescue thee even from the realms of the dead!

But there await me till I die; prepare 374
A mansion for me, as again with me
To dwell; for in thy tomb I will be laid,
In the same cedar, by thy side composed:
For e'en in death I will not be disjoin'd
From thee who hast alone been faithful to to me!

As the Chorus join in Admetus's sorrow the pledge is reiterated, and the dying mother is satisfied.

Alc. Thus pledging, from my hands receive thy children. 386
Adm. A much-loved gift, and from a much-loved hand!

The strength Alcestis had summoned for her last effort now forsakes her: she sinks rapidly.

Alc. A heavy weight hangs on my darkened eye. 396
Adm. If thou forsake me I am lost indeed!
Alc. As one that is no more I now am nothing.
Adm. Ah, raise thy face! forsake not thus thy children!
Alc. It must be so perforce: farewell, my children.

Adm. Look on them, but a look.

Alc. I am no more.

Adm. How dost thou? Wilt thou leave us so?

Alc. Farewell.

Adm. And what a wretch, what a lost wretch am I!

Cho. She's gone! Thy wife, Admetus, is no more!

The little Son flings himself passionately on the corpse [the metre breaking out into strophic alternations].

Strophe

Son. O my unhappy fate! 405
My mother sinks to the dark realms of night,
Nor longer views this golden light;
But to the ills of life exposed
Leaves my poor orphan state!
Her eyes, my father, see, her eyes are closed,
And her hand nerveless falls.
Yet hear me, O my mother, hear my cries!
It is thy son who calls,
Who prostrate on the earth breathes on thy lips his sighs.

Adm. On one that hears not, sees not! I and you
Must bend beneath affliction's heaviest load.

Antistrophe

Son. Ah! she hath left my youth— 417
My mother, my loved mother is no more—
Left me my sufferings to deplore,
Left me a heritage of woe:
Who shall my sorrows soothe?
Thou too, my sister, thy full share shalt know
Of grief, thy heart to rend.
Vain, O my father, vain thy nuptial vows,
Brought to this speedy end:
For when my mother died in ruin sank our house! 425

The Chorus [in calm blank verse] call on their king to command himself and bear what many have had to bear before.—Admetus knows he must: this calamity has not come without notice. He rouses himself to give orders as to the preparations for burial: the mourning rites shall last a whole year, and shall extend throughout the whole region of Thessaly: the very horses shall have their waving manes cut close, and no sound of flute or instrument of joy shall be heard in the city. 445

The corpse is slowly carried out, and at last the Stage is vacant. Then the Chorus address themselves to a Choral Ode in memory of the Spirit now passed beneath the earth: the evolutions as usual, carrying them with each Strophe to one end of the Orchestra, and with the Antistrophe back to the Altar.

CHORAL INTERLUDE II

Strophe I

Immortal bliss be thine, 446
Daughter of Pelias, in the realms below,
Immortal pleasures round thee flow,
Though never there the sun's bright beams shall shine.

Be the black-brow'd Pluto told,
And the Stygian boatman old,
Whose rude hands grasp the oar, the rudder guide,
The dead conveying o'er the tide,—
Let him be told, so rich a freight before
His light skiff never bore;
Tell him that o'er the joyless lakes
The noblest of her sex her dreary passage takes.

Antistrophe

Thy praise the bards shall tell, 458
When to their hymning voice the echo rings,
Or when they sweep the solemn strings,
And wake to rapture the seven-chorded shell:
Or in Sparta's jocund bow'rs,
Circling when the vernal hours
Bring the Carnean Feast, whilst through the night
Full-orb'd the high moon rolls her light;
Or where rich Athens, proudly elevate,
Shows her magnific state:
Their voice thy glorious death shall raise,
And swell th' enraptured strain to celebrate thy praise.

Strophe II

O that I had the pow'r, 470
Could I but bring thee from the shades of night,
Again to view this golden light,
To leave that boat, to leave that dreary shore,
Where Cocytus, deep and wide,
Rolls along his sullen tide!
For thou, O best of women, thou alone
For thy lord's life daredst give thy own.
Light lie the earth upon thy gentle breast,
And be thou ever blest!
While, should he choose to wed again,
Mine and his children's hearts would hold him in disdain.

Antistrophe

When, to avert his doom, 482
His mother in the earth refused to lie;
Nor would his ancient father die
To save his son from an untimely tomb;
Though the hand of time had spread
Hoar hairs o'er each aged head:
In youth's fresh bloom, in beauty's radiant glow,
The darksome way thou daredst to go,
And for thy youthful lord's to give thy life.
Be ours so true a wife!
Though rare the lot, then should we prove
Th' indissoluble bond of faithfulness and love. 493

EPISODE II

Enter on the Stage through the distance-entrance [Left Side-door] the colossal figure of Hercules. Here is the turning-point of the play: which has the peculiarity of combining an element of the Satyric Drama (or Burlesque) with Tragedy, the combination anticipating the 'Action-Drama' (or 'Tragi-Comedy') of modern times. Accord-

ingly the costume and mask of Hercules are compounded of his conventional appearance in Tragedy, in which he is conceived as the perfection of physical strength toiling and suffering for mankind, and his conventional appearance in Satyric plays as the gigantic feeder, etc. The two are harmonized in the conception of conscious energy rejoicing in itself, and plunging with equal eagerness into duty and relaxation, while each lasts.

Hercules hails the Chorus and enquires for Admetus. They reply that he is within the Palace, and [shrinking, like all Greeks, from being the first to tell evil tidings] turn the conversation by enquiring what brings the Demigod to Pheræ—in *stichomuthic dialogue* it is brought out that Hercules is on his way to one of his 'Labors'—that of the Thracian Steeds; and (so lightly does the thought of toil sit on him) it appears he has not troubled to enquire what the task meant: from the Chorus he learns for the first time the many dangers before him, and how the Steeds are devourers of human flesh.

Herc. A toil you tell of that well fits my fate, 517
My life of hardship, ever struggling upward.

Admetus now appears, in mourning garb: after first salutations between the two friends, Hercules enquires what his trouble is, which gives scope for a favorite effect in Greek Drama—'dissimulation.'

Herc. Why are thy locks in sign of mourning shorn? 530

Adm. 'Tis for one dead, whom I to-day must bury.

Herc. The Gods avert thy mourning for a child!

Adm. My children, what I had, live in my house.

Herc. Thy aged father, haply he is gone.

Adm. My father lives, and she that bore me lives.

Herc. Lies then thy wife Alcestis mongst the dead?

Adm. Of her I have in double wise to speak.

Herc. As of the living speakst thou, or the dead?

Adm. She is, and is no more: this grief afflicts me.

Herc. This gives no information: dark thy words. 540

Adm. Knowst thou not then the destiny assign'd her?

Herc. I know that she submits to die for thee.

Adm. To this assenting is she not no more?

Herc. Lament her not too soon: await the time.

Adm. She's dead: one soon to die is now no more.

Herc. It differs wide to be, and not to be.

Adm. Such are thy sentiments, far other mine.

Herc. But wherefore are thy tears? What man is dead?

Adm. A woman: of a woman I made mention.

Herc. Of foreign birth, or one allied to thee? 550

Adm. Of foreign birth, but to my home most dear.

Hercules is moving away for the purpose of seeking hospitality elsewhere: Admetus will not hear of it, and, when Hercules loudly protests, puts aside his opposition with the air of one whose authority in matters of hospitable rites is not to be disputed. He orders attendants to conduct Hercules to a distant quarter of the Palace, to spread a sumptuous feast, and bar fast the doors, lest the voice of woe should affect the feasting guest. When Hercules is gone the Chorus are staggered by such a mastery of personal grief as this implies. But Admetus asks how could he let a guest depart from his house?

My affliction would not thus 575
Be less, but more un hospitable I.

But why, the Chorus ask, conceal the truth?—His friend, answers Admetus would never have entered, had he known. Some may blame him, he continues, but his house simply knows not how to do dishonor to a guest.—Admetus returns into the Palace, to his funeral preparations: the Chorus are moved to enthusiasm by this forgetfulness of self in hospitable devotion; their enthusiasm breaks out in an Ode celebrating the glories of their king's hospitality in the past, and ending in a gleam of hope that it may yet do something for him in the future. 588

CHORAL INTERLUDE III

Evolutions, etc., as usual.

Strophe I

O liberal house! with princely state 589
To many a stranger, many a guest,
Oft hast thou oped thy friendly gate,
Oft spread the hospitable feast.
Beneath thy roof Apollo deign'd to dwell,
Here strung his silver-sounding shell,
And, mixing with thy menial train,
Deigned to be called the shepherd of the plain:
And as he drove his flocks along,
Whether the winding vale they rove,
Or linger in the upland grove,
He tuned the pastoral pipe, or rural song.

Antistrophe

Delighted with his tuneful lay, 601
No more the savage thirsts for blood;
Amidst the flocks, in harmless play,
Wantons the lynx's spotted brood;
Pleas'd from his lair on Othrys' rugged brow
The lion seeks the vale below:
Whilst to the lyre's melodious sound
The dappled hinds in sportive measures bound;
And as the vocal echo rings,
Lightly their nimble feet they ply,
Leaving their pine-clad forests high,
Charm'd by the sweet notes of his gladdening strings.

Strophe II

Hence is thy house, Admetus, graced
With all that plenty's hand bestows;
Near the sweet-streaming current placed,
That from the lake of Boëbia flows;
Far towards the shades of night thy wide domain,
Rich-pastured mead and cultured plain,
Extends, to those Molossian meads
Where the sun stations his unharnessed steeds;
And stretching towards his eastern ray,
Where Pelion, rising in his pride,
Frowns o'er th' Ægean's portless tide:
Reaches from sea to sea thy ample sway.

Antistrophe

And thou wilt ope thy gate e'en now, 625
E'en now wilt thou receive this guest;

Though from thine eye the warm tear flow,
 Though sorrow rend thy suffering breast,
 Sad tribute to thy wife, who, new in death,
 Lamented lies thy roof beneath !
 Nature in truth has thus decreed :
 The pure soul must bear fruit of reverent deed.
 Lo, all the pow'r of wisdom lies
 Fix'd in the righteous bosom : hence
 Rests in my soul this confidence—
 The good shall yet safe from their trials rise. 636

EPISODE III

The Central Gates open and the Funeral Procession slowly files out and begins to fill the Stage. Admetus beside the bier of Alcestis is calling on the Chorus (as representing the citizens of Pheræ) to join in the invocations to the dead—when suddenly another Procession appears on the Stage [entering by the Right Side-door, as from the immediate neighborhood]: it is headed by the father and mother of Admetus, both of whom have reached the furthest verge of old age, and who with difficulty totter along, while attendants follow them bearing sumptuous drapery and other funeral gifts. The scene settles down into the 'Forensic Contest,' a fixed feature of every Greek Tragedy, in which the 'case' of the hero and the opposition to it are brought out with all the formality of a judicial process, the long rheses representing advocates' speeches, the stichomuthic dialogue suggesting cross-examination, and the Chorus interposing as moderators.

Pheres in the tone of conventional consolation speaks of the virtues of the dead, and the special virtue of Alcestis's sacrifice, which has saved her husband's life, and himself from a childless old age; it is meet then that he should do honor to the corpse. Attendants of Admetus advance to receive the presents: Admetus waves them back and stands coldly confronting his father. At last he speaks. His father is an uninvited guest at this funeral feast, and unwelcome: the dead shall never be arrayed in his gifts, Then was the time for his father to show kindness when a life was demanded: and yet he could stand aloof and let a younger die! He will never believe himself the son of so a mean and abject a soul.

At such an age, just trembling on the verge 677
 Of life, thou would'st not, nay, thou dared'st not die
 For thine own son; but thou couldst suffer her,
 Though sprung from foreign blood: with justice then
 Her only as my father must I deem,
 Her only as my mother. Yet this course
 Mightst thou have run with glory, for thy son
 Daring to die; brief was the space of life
 That could remain to thee: I then had lived
 My destin'd time, she too had lived.

Yet Pheres had already had his share of all that makes life happy: a youth amid royal luxury, a prosperous reign, a son to inherit his state and who ever did him honor. But let him beget him new sons to cherish his age and attend him in death: Admetus's hand shall never do such offices for him. And this is all that comes of old age's longing for death: let death show itself, and the old complaints of life are all silenced!

Cho. Forbear! Enough the present weight of woe: 710
 My son, exasperate not a father's mind.

To this long rhesis *Pheres* answers in a set speech of similar length. Is he a slave to be so rated by his own son? And for what? He has given his son birth and nurture, he has already handed over to him a kingdom and will bequeath him yet more wide lands: all that fathers owe to sons he gives. What new obligation is this for Greece to submit to, that a father should die for his son?

Is it a joy to thee 730
 To view the light of heaven, and dost thou think
 Thy father joys not in it? Long I deem
 Our time in death's dark regions: short the space
 Of life, yet sweet! So thought thy coward heart
 And struggled not to die: and thou dost live,
 Passing the bounds of life assign'd by fate,
 By killing her! My mean and abject spirit
 Dost thou rebuke, O timidest of all,
 Vanquish'd e'en by a woman, her who gave
 For thee, her young fair husband, her own life! 740
 A fine device that thou mightst never die,
 Couldst thou persuade—who at the time might be
 Thy wife—to die for thee!

If such a man takes to heaping reproaches on his own kin he shall at least hear the truth told him to his face!

Cho. Too much of ill already hath been spoken: 750
 Forbear, old man, nor thus revile thy son.

Admetus says if his father does not like to hear the truth he should not have done the wrong.

Pher. Had I died for thee, greater were the wrong.
Adm. Is death alike then to the young and old?
Pher. Man's due is one life, not to borrow more.
Adm. Thine drag thou on and out-tire heaven's age!
Pher. Darest thou to curse thy parents, nothing wrong'd?
Adm. Parents in dotage lusting still to live! 760
Pher. And thou—what else but life with this corpse buyest?
Adm. This corpse—the symbol of thy infamy!
Pher. For us she died not: that thou canst not say!
Adm. Ah! mayst thou some time come to need my aid!
Pher. Wed many wives that more may die for thee!
Adm. On thee rests this reproach—thou daredst not die!
Pher. Sweet is this light of heav'n! sweet is this light!
Adm. Base is thy thought, unworthy of a man!
Pher. The triumph is not thine to entomb my age.
Adm. Die when thou wilt, inglorious wilt thou die. 770
Pher. Thy ill report will not affect me dead.
Adm. Alas, that age should outlive sense of shame!
Pher. But lack of age's wisdom slew her youth.
Adm. Begone, and suffer me to entomb my dead.
Pher. I go: no fitter burier than thyself
 Her murderer! Look for reckoning from her friends:
 Acastus is no man, if his hand fails
 Dearly to avenge on thee his sister's blood.
Adm. Why, get you gone, thou and thy worthy wife:

Grow old in consort—that is now your lot— 780
 The childless parents of a living son :
 For never more under one common roof
 Come you and I together : had it need,
 By herald I your hearth would have renounced.

Pheres and his train withdraw along the Stage [to the Right Side-door]. The interrupted Funeral Procession is continued, filing, amidst lamentations of the Chorus, down the steps from the Stage into the Orchestra: there the Chorus join it and the whole passes out [by the Right Archway] to the royal sepulchre in the neighbourhood.

Stage and Orchestra both vacant for a while.

STAGE EPISODE*

Enter the Stage [by one of the Inferior Doors of the Palace] the Steward of Admetus: he has stolen away to get a moment's respite from the hateful hilarity of this strange visitor—some ruffian or robber he supposes—on whom his office has condemned him to wait, and thereby to miss paying the last offices to a mistress who has been more like a mother to him. The guest has been willing to enter, and though he saw the mourning of the household, he did not allow it to make any difference to his mirth:

Grasping in his hands 804
 A goblet wreath'd with ivy, fill'd it high
 With the grape's purple juice, and quaff'd it off
 Untemper'd, till the glowing wine inflamed him;
 Then binding round his head a myrtle wreath,
 Howls dismal discord:—two displeasing strains
 We heard, his harsh notes who in nought revered
 Th' afflictions of Admetus, and the voice
 Of sorrow through the family that wept
 Our mistress. Yet our tearful eyes we showed not,
 Admetus so commanded, to the guest. 814

He starts as he feels on his shoulder the huge hand of *Hercules*, who has followed him, and now appears on the Stage goblet in hand, wreathed and attired like a reveller in full revel. *Hercules* good-humouredly scolds him for letting a remote family bereavement hinder him from showing a sociable countenance to his lord's guest. He lectures him on the easy ethics of the banquet-hour:

Come hither, that thou mayst be wiser, friend: 832
 Knowst thou the nature of all mortal things?
 Not thou, I ween: how shouldst thou? hear from me.
 By all of human race death is a debt
 That must be paid; and none of mortal men
 Knows whether till to-morrow life's short space
 Shall be extended: such the dark events
 Of fortune, never to be learn'd or traced
 By any skill. Instructed thus by me 840
 Bid pleasure welcome, drink; the life allow'd
 From day to day esteem thine own; all else
 Fortune's.

*That is, a scene carried on upon the Stage without the presence of the Chorus in the Orchestra;—a very rare effect in Greek Drama.

The Steward receives his lecture with a bad grace: he knows all that—but there is a time for all things. His manner raises *Hercules'* suspicions that Admetus has been keeping something back:

Herc. Is it some sorrow which he told not me? 866
Stew. Go thou with joy: ours are our lord's afflictions.
Herc. These are not words that speak a foreign loss.
Stew. If such, thy revelry had not displeased me.

The secret is not long kept against the questioning of *Hercules*. When the truth comes out *Hercules* drops the goblet: he might have known all from so grief-worn a face! All the lightness of the reveller disappears, and the godlike bearing returns to *Hercules'* figure as he catches the full dignity of his friend's hospitable feat: he is fired to essay a rival deed of nobility.

Now, my firm heart, and thou, my daring soul, 894
 Show what a son the daughter of *Electryon*,
Alcmena of *Tirynthia*, bore to *Jove*!
 This lady, new in death, behoves me save,
 And, to Admetus rendering grateful service,
 Restore his lost *Alcestis* to his house.
 This sable-vested tyrant of the dead
 Mine eye shall watch, not without hope to find him
 Drinking th' oblations nigh the tomb. If e'er
 Seen from my secret stand I rush upon him,
 These arms shall grasp him till his panting sides
 Labour for breath; and who shall force him from me
 Till he gives back this woman? 906

If he fails to find *Death* elsewhere he will descend to the dark world of spirits itself, rather than fail in making a fit return to his friend:

Whose hospitable heart 912
 Receiv'd me in his house, nor made excuse
 Though pierc'd with such a grief; this he conceal'd
 Through generous thought, and reverence to his friend.
 Who in *Thessalia* bears a warmer love
 To strangers? Who, through all the realms of *Greece*?
 It never shall be said this noble man
 Received in me a base and worthless wretch!

*Exit [through the Stage Right Side-Door] in the direction of the tomb.
 Stage and Orchestra vacant for awhile.*

EPISODE V

Return of the Funeral Procession, headed by the Chorus who remain in the Orchestra; the rest file up the steps on to the stage, Admetus last. The Episode is technically a 'Dirge' between Admetus, whose speeches fall into the rhythm of a Funeral March, and the Chorus, who speak in Strophes and Antistrophes of more elaborate lyric rhythm, often interrupted by the wails of Admetus.

Admetus reaching the top of the Steps from the Orchestra stands face to face with the splendid façade of his Palace. Hatel entrance, hateful aspect of a widowed home! How find rest there, in the heavy woes to which he is now doomed? It is with the dead that rest is found: his heart is in their dark houses, where he has placed a loved hostage torn from him by fate!

Chorus [in Strophe]. Nevertheless he must go forward; he must hide him in the deepest recesses of his Palace with his grief, the helpless groans that yet will nothing aid her whom he will never see more! 938

Admetus cries that that is the deepest wound of all! Would he had never wedded! To mourn single is pain endurable: to see children wasting with disease, to see death invading the nuptial bed—that is the pang unbearable! 950

Chorus [in Antistrophe]. Fate is resistless: shall sorrow then have no bounds? Other men have known what it is to lose a wife: and in one or other of innumerable forms misery has found out every son of mortality. 656

Admetus begins to speak of the life-long mourning for the lost—but the thought is too much for him; why did they hold him back when he would have cast himself into the gaping tomb, and gone the last journey with his love. 963

The Chorus [in Strophe] think of one they knew who lost a son in the flower of his age, an only son and well worthy of tears: yet he bore his lonely burden like a man, and—courage! his hair is white and he is nearing the end. 969

Admetus moves a few steps forward and the Procession advances towards the portal: but the contrast catches his thought between this and another procession towards the same threshold, when, amidst blazing torches of Pelian pine and bridal dances, he led his new wife by the hand, and shouts wished their union happy. Now wails for shouts, black for glistening raiment, and before him the solitary chamber! 983

Chorus [in Antistrophe]. Trouble has come upon their master all at once, in the midst of prosperity, and on one unschooled in misfortune. But if the wife is gone the love is left. Many have had *Admetus's* loss: but his gain let him remember: a rescued life. 988

As if this jarred upon his mind, *Admetus* turns round and addresses the *Chorus*, his whole tone changed [*the dirge measures giving place to blank verse*].

Adm. My friends, I deem the fortune of my wife
Happier than mine, though otherwise it seems. 990
For nevermore shall sorrow touch her breast,
And she with glory rests from various ills.
But I, who ought not live, my destined hour
O'erpassing, shall drag on a mournful life,
Late taught what sorrow is. How shall I bear
To enter here? To whom shall I address
My speech? Whose greeting renders my return
Delightful? Which way shall I turn? Within
In lonely sorrow shall I waste away,
As, widowed of my wife, I see my couch, 1000
The seats deserted where she sat, the rooms
Wanting her elegance. Around my knees
My children hang, and weep their mother lost:
The household servants for their mistress sigh.
This is the scene of misery in my home:
Abroad the nuptials of Thessalia's youth
And the bright circles of assembled dames
Will but augment my grief: how shall I bear
To see the lov'd companions of my wife!
And if one hates me, he will say: Behold 1010
The man who basely lives, who dared not die,

But giving, through the meanness of his soul,
His wife, avoided death—yet would be deem'd
A man: he hates his parents, yet himself
Had not the spirit to die. These ill reports
Cleave to me: why then wish for longer life,
On evil tongues thus fallen, and evil days!

Admetus sinks down on the threshold and buries his face in his robe. The Chorus gather up the feeling of the situation in a full Choral Ode, celebrating the natural topics of consolation; the stern laws of Necessity, the fair memory of the dead.

CHORAL INTERLUDE IV

Strophe I

My venturous foot delights 1018
To tread the Muses' arduous heights;
Their hallow'd haunts I love to explore,
And listen to their lore:
Yet never could my searching mind
Aught, like Necessity, resistless find.
No herb of sovereign pow'r to save,
Whose virtues Orpheus joy'd to trace,
And wrote them in the rolls of Thrace;
Nor all that Phœbus gave,
Instructing the Asclepian train,
When various ills the human frame assail,
To heal the wound, to soothe the pain,
'Gainst Her stern force avail.

Antistrophe

Of all the Pow'rs Divine 1032
Alone none dares to approach Her shrine;
To Her no hallow'd image stands,
No altar She commands.
In vain the victim's blood would flow,
She never deigns to hear the suppliant's vow.
Never to me mayst Thou appear,
Dread Goddess, with severer mien
Than oft in life's past tranquil scene
Thou hast been known to wear.
By Thee Jove works his stern behest:
Thy force subdues e'en Scythia's stubborn steel;
Nor ever does Thy rugged breast
The touch of pity feel.

Strophe II

And now, with ruin pleas'd, 1046
On thee, O King, her hands have seiz'd,
And bound thee in her iron chain:
Yet her fell force sustain.
For from the gloomy realms of night
No tears recall the dead to life's sweet light.
No virtue, though to heav'n allied,
Saves from the inevitable doom:
Heroes and sons of gods have died,
And sunk into the tomb.
Dear, whilst our eyes her presence blest,

Dear, in the gloomy mansions of the dead :
Most generous she, the noblest, best,
Who graced thy nuptial bed.

Antistrophe

Thy wife's sepulchral mound
Deem not as common, worthless ground
That swells their breathless bodies o'er
Who die, and are no more.
No, be it honor'd as a shrine ;
Raised high, and hallow'd to some Pow'r Divine :
The traveller, as he passes by,
Shall thither bend his devious way,
With reverence gaze, and with a sigh,
Smite on his breast, and say :
"She died of old to save her lord ;
Now blest among the blest ; Hail, Pow'r revered,
To us thy wonted grace afford !"
Such vows shall be preferred.

EXODUS OR FINALE

Re-enter Hercules, leading a veiled woman

Herc. I would speak freely to my friend, Admetus,
Nor what I blame keep secret in my breast.
I came to thee amidst thy ills, and thought
I had been worthy to be proved thy friend.
Thou told'st me not the obsequies prepared
Were for thy wife ; but in thy house receiv'dst me
As if thou griev'dst for one of foreign birth.
I bound my head with garlands, to the gods
Pouring libations in thy house with grief
Oppress'd. I blame this : yes, in such a state
I blame this : yet I come not in thine ills
To give thee pain ; why I return in brief
Will I unfold. This woman from my hands
Receive to thy protection, till return'd
I bring the Thracian steeds, having there slain
The proud Bistonian tyrant ; should I fail—
Be that mischance not mine, for much I wish
Safe to revisit thee—yet should I fail,
I give her to the safeguard of thy house.
For with much toil she came unto my hands.
To such as dare contend some public games,
Which well deserv'd my toil, I find propos'd ;
I bring her thence, she is the prize of conquest :
For slight assays each victor led away
A courser ; but for those of harder proof
The conqueror was rewarded from the herd,
And with some female graced ; victorious there,
A prize so noble it were base to slight.
Take her to thy protection, not by stealth
Obtain'd, but the reward of many toils :
The time, perchance, may come when thou wilt thank me.

Adm. Not that I slight thy friendship, or esteem thee
Other than noble, wished I to conceal

1060

1080

1090

1100

My wife's unhappy fate ; but to my grief
It had been added grief, if thou had'st sought
Elsewhere the rites of hospitality ;
Suffice it that I mourn ills which are mine.
This woman, if it may be, give in charge,
I beg thee, king, to some Thessalian else,
That hath not cause like me to grieve ; in Phææ
Thou may'st find many friends ; call not my woes
Fresh to my memory ; never in my house
Could I behold her, but my tears would flow :
To sorrow add not sorrow ; now enough
I sink beneath its weight. Where should her youth
With me be guarded ? for her gorgeous vests
Proclaim her young ; if mixing with the men
She dwell beneath my roof, how shall her fame,
Conversing with the youths, be kept unsullied ?
It is not easy to restrain the warmth
Of that intemperate age ; my care for thee
Warns me of this. Or if from them remov'd
I hide her in th' apartments late my wife's,
How to my bed admit her ? I should fear
A double blame : my citizens would scorn me
As light and faithless to the kindest wife
That died for me, if to her bed I took
Another blooming bride ; and to the dead
Behoves me pay the highest reverence
Due to her merit. And thou, lady, know,
Whoe'er thou art, that form, that shape, that air
Resembles my Alcestis ! By the Gods,
Remove her from my sight ! it is too much,
I cannot bear it ; when I look on her,
Methinks I see my wife ; this wounds my heart
And calls the tears fresh gushing from my eyes.
This is the bitterness of grief indeed !

Chor. I cannot praise thy fortune ; but behoves thee
To bear with firmness what the gods assign.

Herc. O that from Jove I had the pow'r to bring
Back from the mansions of the dead thy wife
To heav'n's fair light, that grace achieving for thee !

Adm. I know thy friendly will ; but how can this
Be done ? The dead return not to this light.

Herc. Check then thy swelling griefs ; with reason rule them.

Adm. How easy to advise, but hard to bear !

Herc. What should it profit should'st thou always groan ?

Adm. I know it ; but I am in love with grief.

Herc. Love to the dead calls forth the ceaseless tear.

Adm. O, I am wretched more than words can speak.

Herc. A good wife hast thou lost, who can gainsay it ?

Adm. Never can life be pleasant to me more.

Herc. Thy sorrow now is new ; time will abate it.

Adm. Time say'st thou ? Yes, the time that brings me death.

Herc. Some young and lovely bride will bid it cease.

Adm. No more : What say'st thou ? Never could I think —

Herc. Will thou still lead a lonely widow'd life ?

Adm. Never shall other women share my bed.

Herc. And think'st thou this will aught avail the dead ?

1110

1120

1130

1140

1150

1160

Adm. This honor is her due, where'er she be.
Herc. This hath my praise, though near allied to frenzy.
Adm. Praise me or not, I ne'er will wed again.
Herc. I praise thee that thou'rt faithful to thy wife.
Adm. Though dead, if I betray her, may I die!
Herc. Well, take this noble lady to thy house. 1170
Adm. No, by thy father Jove, let me entreat thee.
Herc. Not to do this would be the greatest wrong.
Adm. To do it would with anguish rend my heart.
Herc. Let me prevail; this grace may find its meed.
Adm. O that thou never had'st receiv'd this prize!
Herc. Yet in my victory thou art victor with me.
Adm. 'Tis nobly said: yet let this woman go.
Herc. If she must go, she shall! but must she go?
Adm. She must, if I incur not thy displeasure.
Herc. There is a cause that prompts my earnestness. 1180
Adm. Thou hast prevail'd, but much against my will.
Herc. The time will come when thou wilt thank me for it.
Adm. Well, if I must receive her, lead her in.
Herc. Charge servants with her! No, that must not be.
Adm. Lead her thyself, then, if thy will incline thee.
Herc. No, to thy hand alone will I commit her.
Adm. I touch her not; but she hath leave to enter.
Herc. I shall entrust her only to thy hand.
Adm. Thou dost constrain me, king, against my will.
Herc. Venture to stretch thy hand, and touch the stranger's.
Adm. I touch her, as I would the headless Gorgon. 1190
Herc. Hast thou her hand?
Adm. I have.
Herc. (lifting the veil) Then hold her safe.
 Hereafter thou wilt say the son of Jove
 Hath been a generous guest; view now her face,
 See if she bears resemblance to thy wife,
 And thus made happy bid farewell to grief.
Adm. O, Gods, what shall I say? 'Tis marvelous,
 Exceeding hope. See I my wife indeed?
 Or doth some God distract me with false joy?
Herc. In very deed dost thou behold thy wife. 1200
Adm. See that it be no phantom from beneath.
Herc. Make not thy friend one that evokes the shades.
Adm. And do I see my wife, whom I entomb'd?
Herc. I marvel not that thou art diffident.
Adm. I touch her; may I speak to her as living?
Herc. Speak to her: thou hast all thy heart could wish.
Adm. Dearest of women, do I see again
 That face, that person? This exceeds all hope;
 I never thought that I should see thee more.
Herc. Thou hast her; may no God be envious of thee. 1210
Adm. O be thou blest, thou generous son of Jove!
 Thy father's might protect thee! Thou alone
 Hast rais'd her to me; from the realms below
 How hast thou brought her to the light of life?
Herc. I fought with him that lords it o'er the shades.
Adm. Where with the gloomy tyrant didst thou fight?
Herc. I lay in wait and seized him at the tomb.
Adm. But wherefore doth my wife thus speechless stand?

Herc. It is not yet permitted* that thou hear
 Her voice addressing thee, till from the Gods 1220
 That rule beneath she be unsanctified
 With hallow'd rites, and the third morn return.
 But lead her in; and as thou'rt just in all
 Besides, Admetus, see thou reverence strangers.
 Farewell: I go t' achieve the destined toil
 For the imperial son of Sthenelus.
Adm. Abide with us, and share my friendly hearth.
Herc. That time will come again; this demands speed.
Adm. Success attend thee: safe may'st thou return. 1230
 Now to my citizens I give in charge,
 And to each chief, that for this blest event
 They institute the dance; let the steer bleed,
 And the rich altars, as they pay their vows,
 Breathe incense to the gods; for now I rise
 To better life, and grateful own the blessing.

THE CHORUS, RETIRING:

Our fates the Gods in various shapes dispose: 1236
 Heaven sets the crown on many a hopeless cause:
 That which is looked for
 Fails in the issue,
 To goals unexpected
 Heav'n points out a passage:
 And this is the end of the matter.

* The fact was that the *Alcestis* was represented in place of a 'Satyric Drama,' which only allowed two (speaking) personages on the Stage at the same time.

THE CYCLOPS OF EURIPIDES

A SPECIMEN OF THE SATYRIC DRAMA

Scene: Sicily, in front of cave of the Cyclops, Polyphemus.

Prologue by Silenus, the rural demi-god, who recounts his faithful service to Bacchus, and yet the ungrateful god has let himself and his children fall into this slavery to the horrid Cyclops Polyphemus, where, worst of their many woes, they are debarred from the wine they worship.

Parode: The Chorus of Satyrs driving their goats and lamenting how different this from the merry service of Bacchus.

Episode I. Silenus hurries back with the news that a ship is approaching to water in the island: fresh victims for the monster. *Enter Ulysses and crew:* mutual explanations, all couched in 'burlesque' tone. The mariners have had no food except flesh, and gladly partake milk and fruits of the Satyrs, affording in return to Silenus the long-lost luxury of wine: the scene then going on to paint [with the utmost coarseness] the oncoming of drunkenness.

Suddenly *enter Polyphemus:* Ulysses and the crew hide. After some rough bandying between the Monster and the Chorus, the strangers are discovered: and Silenus, to save himself, turns traitor, and tells Polyphemus how they have beaten him because he would not let them steal, also what dire woes they were going to work upon Polyphemus. In spite of their protests Silenus is believed: Ulysses promises, if set free, to erect shrines in Greece for the Cyclops, besides dwelling upon the impiety of attacking innocent strangers: Polyphemus replies that he does not care for shrines, and as for impiety he is independent of Zeus; which gives occasion for a glorification of the life of nature. They are driven into the cave to be fed on at leisure.

Choral Ode: General disgust at the monster.

Episode II. Ulysses [apparently standing at the mouth of the cave] describes Polyphemus gorging—then details his plan of deliverance by aid of the wine.

Choral Ode. Lyric delight of Chorus at prospect of deliverance.

Episode III. The Cyclops appears sated with his banquet, and settling down to this new treat of drinking—the effects of on-coming intoxication are painted again in Polyphemus, with the usual coarseness—a farcical climax being reached when the monster begins to be affectionate to his cup-bearer, old Silenus, in memory of Zeus and his famous cup-bearer, Ganymede.

Choral Ode. Anticipation of Revenge.

Exodus. The plan of Revenge, the boring out of the Cyclops's one eye while overpowered with drink, is carried out—various farcical effects by the way, e.g., the Chorus drawing back with excuses and leaving Ulysses to do the deed at the critical moment. The Drama ends with the Monster's rage and vain attempts to catch the culprit, Ulysses putting him off with his feigned name 'No man': thus all are delivered.

THE BACCHANALS OF EURIPIDES*

PROLOGUE

The permanent scene covered by movable scenery representing a wide landscape—the valley of the Dirce. A pile of buildings occupies the middle, to which the central entrance is an approach: these are the Cadmeia and royal palaces. That on the left is the palace of Pentheus, and further to the left is the mystic scene of Bacchus's birth—a heap of ruins, still miraculously smouldering, and covered by trailing vines. On the right is the palace of Cadmus, and the scene extends to take in the Electran gate of Thebes, and (on the right turn-scene) the slopes of Cithæron.

DIONYSUS enters, in mortal guise, through the distance archway, and (in formal prologue) opens the situation. He brings out the points of the landscape before him, dear as the site of his miraculous birth and the sad end of his mortal mother. Then he details the Asiatic realms through which he has made triumphant progress, Lydia, Phrygia, sun-seared Persia, Bactria; the wild, wintry Median land; Araby the Blest, and the cities by the sea; everywhere his orgies accepted and his godhead received. Now for the first time he has reached an Hellenic city: and here—where least it should have been—his divinity is questioned by his own mother's sisters who make the story of his birth a false rumor, devised to cover Semele's shame, and avenged by the lightning flash which destroyed her. To punish his unnatural kin he has infected all their womenkind with his sacred phrensy, and maddened out of their quiet life, they are now on the revel under the pale pines of the mountain, unseemly mingled with the sons of Thebes: so shall the recusant city learn her guilt, and make atonement to him and his mother. Pentheus, it seems, is the main foe of his godhead, who reigns as king over Thebes, the aged Cadmus having yielded the sovereignty in his lifetime to his sister's son: he repels Bacchus from the sacred libations, nor names him in prayer. So he and Thebes must learn a dread lesson, and then away to make revelation in other lands. As to force, if attempt is made to drive the Mænads from the mountains, Bacchus himself will mingle in the war, and for this he has assumed mortal shape.

He calls upon his 'Thyasus of women,' fellow-pilgrims from the lands beyond the sea, to beat their Phrygian drums in noisy ritual about the palace of Pentheus till all Thebes shall flock to hear: he goes to join his worshippers on Cithæron.

70

PARODE OR CHORUS-ENTRY

The Chorus enter the orchestra, Asiatic women in wild attire of Bacchic rites, especially the motley (dappled fawnskin) always associated with abandon: they move with wild gestures and dances associated with Asiatic rituals.

The wild ode resumes the joyous dance that has made their whole way from Asia one long sacred revel—

Toilless toil and labour sweet.

Blest above all men he who hallows his life in such mystic rites, and purified with holiest waters, goes dancing with the worshippers of Bacchus, and

*The quotations are from Milman's translation in Routledge's Universal Library.

of thee, mighty Mother Cybele, shaking his thyrsus, and all his locks crowned with ivy. Bacchus's birth is sung, and how from the flashing lightning Jove snatched him and, preserved in his thigh, until at the fated hour he gave him to light, horned and crowned with serpents. Wherefore should Thebes, sacred scene of the miracle, be one blossom of revellers, clad in motley and waving the thyrsus, the whole land maddening with the dance. The Chorus think of the first origin of such noisy joys, when the wild ones of Crete beat their cymbals round the sunless caverns where the infant Jove was hidden, and these rites of Rhoea soon mingled for the frantic Satyrs with the third year's dances to Bacchus. Then the ode recurs to the bliss of such holy rites, luxurious interchange of wild energy and delicious repose. They long for the climax of the dance, when, with luxuriant hair all floating, they can rage and madden to the clash of heavy cymbals and the shout *Évoë, Évoë*, frisking like colts to the soft breathing of the holy pipe, while the mountain echoes beneath their boundings. 178

EPISODE I

The blind prophet Teiresias enters from Thebes, and is soon joined by Cadmus from the palace. Old as they are they have put on the livery of the god, and will join in the dance, for which supernatural strength will be given: they alone of the city are wise.

The ancestral faith, coeval with our race,
No subtle reasoning, if it soar aloft
Ev'n to the height of wisdom, can o'erthrow.

They are stopped by the entrance of Pentheus, as from a far journey. His opening words betray his anxiety as to the scandal in his realm—the young women of his family, even his mother Agave, all gone to join the impious revels.

In pretext, holy sacrificing Mænads,
But serving Aphrodite more than Bacchus.

Some he has imprisoned, the rest he will hunt from the mountains, and put an end to the joyous movements of this fair stranger with golden locks, who has come to guide their maidens to soft inebriate rites. Suddenly he sees his hero ancestor and the prophet in Bacchic attire. Bitter reproaches follow; the scene soon settling down into the forensic contest. Teiresias elaborately puts the case for the god. Man has two primal needs: one is the solid food of the boon mother, the other has been discovered by the son of their Semele—the rich grape's juice: this beguiles the miserable of their sorrow, this gives all-healing sleep. The author of such blessings is recognized in heaven as a god: yet Pentheus puts scorn upon him by the story of the babe hidden in Jove's thigh. [This is explained away by a play upon words, as between *ho meeros*, thigh, and *homeeros*, a hostage: Jove hid the infant god in a cleft of air, a hostage from the wrath of Heré.] Prophecy is ascribed to the wine-god, for phrensy is prophetic; and he is an ally in war, sending panic on the foe ere lance crosses lance. He will soon be a god celebrated through all Greece and hold torchdance on the crags of Delphi. Let Thebes take her place among the worshippers, fearing nought for the purity of its daughters, who will be no less holy in the revel than at home.—The Chorus approve, and Cadmus follows on the same side, urging policy: a splendid falsehood making Semele the mother of a god will advance their household. Pentheus shakes off Cadmus's clasp in disgust: bids some of his servants go and overturn the prophet's place of divination, and others seek out the stranger who leads the rebels. Exit to the palace, while Teiresias and Cadmus depart, in horror at his impiety, in the direction of Cithæron. 379

CHORAL INTERLUDE I

Shocked at such defiance of heaven the Chorus invoke Sanctity, crowned as goddess in the nether world, to hear the awful words of Pentheus, uttered against the immortal son of Semele, first and best of gods, ruler of the flower-crowned feast, and the dance's jocund strife, and the laughter, and the sparkling wine-cup, and the sweet sleep that follows the festival. Sorrow closes the lot of such aweless, unbridled madness: stability is for the calmly reverent life, knitting whole houses in sweet domestic harmony. Clasp the present of brief life: no grasping after a bright future with far-fetched wisdom. Oh, for the lands where the graces and sweet desire have their haunts, and young loves soothe the heart with tender guile: fit regions for the Bacchanals, whose joy is Peace—wealth-giver to rich and poor. Away with stern austerity: hail the homely wisdom of the multitude. 439

EPISODE II

An officer brings in Dionysus as prisoner: he has yielded himself without resistance, while as for the imprisoned worshippers their chains have fallen off spontaneous, and they are away to the revels on the mountains. In long-drawn parallel dialogue Pentheus questions the Stranger—struck with his beauty through he be. Dionysus calmly answers to every point, but allows the orgies are secret and must not be revealed to the uninitiated. The King threatens in vain.

Pen. First I will clip away those soft bright locks.
Dio. My locks are holy, dedicate to my god.
Pen. Next, give thou me that thyrsus in thy hand.
Dio. Take it thyself; 'tis Dionysus' wand.
Pen. I'll bind thy body in strong iron chains.
Dio. My god himself will loose them when he will.
Pen. When thou invok'st him 'mid thy Bacchanals.
Dio. Even now he is present, he beholds me now.
Pen. Where is he then? mine eyes perceive him not.
Dio. Near me: the impious eyes may not discern him.

The king relies on his superior strength.

Dio. Thou knowest not where thou art or what thou art.
Pen. Pentheus, Agave's son, my sire Echion.
Dio. Thou hast a name whose very sound is woe.

Dionysus is removed a prisoner to the palace of Pentheus, while the latter retires to prepare measures against the Mænads.

CHORAL INTERLUDE II

The Chorus, addressing the landscape before them, expostulate with the sacred stream in which the infant god was dipped for not accepting the divinity whose mystic name is 'Twice-born.' They call upon Dionysus to see them from Olympus, his rapt prophets at strife with dark necessity, and, golden wand in hand, to come to their rescue against the threats of the proud dragon-brood. They are wondering what fair land of song may be holding their sacred leader, when cries from within put an end to the ode. 582

EPISODE III

In wild lyric snatches shouts are interchanged between Dionysus within and groups of the disordered Chorus, bringing out the tumultuous scene—the earth rocking beneath them, sounds of crashing masonry, capitals of pillars hurled through the air: then by the machinery of the *hemicyclium* the whole scene left of the center disappears and is replaced by a tableau represent-

ing Pentheus' palace in ruins, and the smoldering tomb of Semele surmounted by bright flame. From the ruins steps Dionysus, unharmed and free, the metre braking into accelerated rhythm. 613

- Dio.* O, ye Barbarian women, Thus prostrate in dismay;
Upon the earth ye've fallen! See ye not as ye may,
How Bacchus Pentheus' palace In wrath hath shaken down?
Rise up! rise up! take courage—Shake off that trembling swoon.
- Chor.* O light that goodliest shinest Over our mystic rite,
In state forlorn we saw thee—Saw with what deep affright!
- Dio.* How to despair ye yielded As I boldly entered in
To Pentheus, as if captured, into that fatal gin.
- Chor.* How could I less? Who guards us If thou shouldst come to woe?
But how wast thou delivered From thy ungodly foe?
- Dio.* Myself myself delivered With ease and effort slight.
- Chor.* Thy hands had he not bound them In halts strong and tight?
- Dio.* 'Twas even then I mocked him: He thought me in his chain;
He touched me not nor reached me; His idle thoughts were vain!
In the stable stood a heifer Where he thought he had me bound;
Round the beast's knees his cords And cloven hoofs he wound,
Wrath-breathing, from his body The sweat fell like a flood,
He bit his lips in fury, While I beside who stood
Looked on in unmoved quiet.

As at that instant come,
Shook Bacchus the strong palace, And on his mother's tomb
Flames kindled. When he saw it, on fire the palace deeming,
Hither he rushed and thither, For 'Water, water,' screaming;
And every slave 'gan labor, But labored all in vain,
The toil he soon abandoned. As though I had fled amain
He rushed into the palace: In his hand the dark sword gleamed.
Then as it seemed, great Bromius—I say but, as it seemed—
In the hall a bright light kindled. On that he rushed, and there,
As slaying me in vengeance, Stood stabbing the thin air.
But then the avenging Bacchus Wrought new calamities;
From roof to base that palace In smouldering ruin lies.
Bitter ruing our imprisonment, With toil forespent he threw
On earth his useless weapon. Mortal, he had dared to do
'Gainst a god unholy battle. But I, in quiet state,
Unheeding Pentheus' anger, Came through the palace gate.
It seems even now his sandal Is sounding on its way;
Soon is he here before us, And what now will he say?
With ease will I confront him, Ire-breathing though he stand.
'Tis easy to a wise man To practice self-command. 651

Blank verse is resumed as Pentheus enters, and meets his escaped prisoner who calmly confronts him. As Pentheus begins to threaten, Dionysus advises him first to hear the messenger even now entering from Cithæron. An elaborate *Messenger's Speech* describes the miraculous life of the Mænads as they lie on the mountains, careless but not immodest. At the touch of their thyrsus the rock yields dew and the soil wine; their fingers lightly scraping the soil draw streams of exquisite milk, and honey distils from their ivied staffs. A city-bred agitator stirred up the herdsmen to confront them, but the phrensied women drove the men before them, and tore the herds to pieces; like a flock of birds they skimmed along the land, and all gave way before them.

And what they threw across their shoulders, clung
Unfastened, nor fell down to the black ground,

No brass, nor ponderous iron; on their locks
Was fire that burned them not.

Then god-given fountains washed off the stains of their toil, and their serpents licked them clean. Even the Messenger advises submission to so mighty a god, dispensing such gifts.

Pentheus breathes nothing but defiance, and issues orders for the whole military of Thebes to assemble. Yet he is bewildered by the stranger, who doing or suffering still holds his peace. In long-drawn parallel verses, Dionysus gradually assumes the friend, and—still warning the king that he is on the side of the god—insinuates into the mind of Pentheus the idea of visiting the scene, disguised in the feminine robes of the revellers. As the king retires to prepare, Dionysus proclaims that he is fallen into the net, and vengeance shall first deprive him of sense and then destroy him. 868

CHORAL INTERLUDE III

As the crisis comes nearer the Chorus long for the moment of escape—the sensation of the hart that has leaped the net and with storm-wind haste escaped the hunter's pursuit and reached the silent shadow of the old hospitable wood. VICTORY IS THE JOY OF JOYS. Slow and true are the avenging deities, with printless foot hounding the impious along their winding path: for law is old as oldest time. VICTORY IS THE JOY OF JOYS. Happy the sailor in port, he whose race is o'er: hopes hover over thousands, but Happiness alone is his
That happy is to-day. 922

EPISODE IV

Pentheus appears from the palace of Cadmus in disguise as a Mænad. Infatuation has become a phrensy: he sees double, Dionysus seems a bull, his eyes penetrate into distance and perceive his mother and her comrades. Unconscious of the laughter of Dionysus he adjusts his feminine dress and practices the Mænad step. Irony is added:

- Dio.* Follow me! thy preserver goes before thee;
Another takes thee hence.
- Pen.* Mean'st thou my mother?
- Dio.* Aloft shalt thou be borne —
- Pen.* O the soft carriage!
- Dio.* In thy mother's hands.
- Pen.* Wilt make me thus luxurious?
- Dio.* Strange luxury, indeed!
- Pen.* 'Tis my desert.

Exclaiming in ambiguous phrase as to the awful end to which he is destined, Dionysus leads the king out towards Cithæron. 986

CHORAL INTERLUDE IV

The crisis is come! Ho, to the mountains; where the Chorus picture the scene already being enacted, the hunter of the Bacchanals caught in the inexorable net of death. VENGEANCE ON THE LAWLESS SON OF ÉCHION is the recurrent burden of the ode. Its prayer is to hold fast the pious mind, the smooth painless life at peace with heaven and earth, instead of fighting with the invincible, aweless outcast from all law. 1036

EPISODE V

A *Messenger's Speech* describes the catastrophe. How Pentheus, arrived within sight of the orderly Mænads, was not satisfied, but desired a higher

station from which to view their unseemly life. Then a wonder: the stranger bent down an ash tree, and seating Pentheus in a fork of it let the tree return to its position, holding the wretched king aloft, seen of all.

The stranger from our view had vanished quite.
Then from the heavens a voice, as it should seem,
Dionysus, shouted loud, "Behold, I bring,
O maidens, him that you and me, our rites,
Our orgies laughed to scorn; now take your vengeance."
And as he spake, a light of holy fire
Stood up, and blazed from earth straight up to heaven.
Silent the air, silent the verdant grove
Held its still leaves; no sound of living thing.
They, as their ears just caught the half-heard voice,
Stood up erect, and rolled their wandering eyes,
Again he shouted. But when Cadmus' daughters
Heard manifest the god's awakening voice,
Forth rushed they, fleetest than the winged dove,
Their nimble feet quick coursing up and down.

How then the Mænads set upon him and tore him to pieces, his own mother leading them on: in triumph dance they are bringing his head to the city. Adore the gods, is the moral. 1164

CHORAL INTERLUDE V

A short outburst of triumph from the Chorus: then the 1180

EXODUS

begins with the approach of the Mænads, Agave bearing her son's head on a thyrsus. In a brief *lyric concerto* between her and the mocking Chorus her phrensiéd triumph is brought out, and how she takes the bleeding object to be head of a young lion. At that moment the trumpet sounds, and the army that had been summoned appears at the Electran gate. Agave turns to them, and (in *blank verse*) calls all Thebans to behold the quarry she has taken without the useless weapons of the hunter; it shall be nailed up a trophy before her father's house. *Shortly after enters on the right a melancholy procession of Cadmus and his servants bearing the fragments of Pentheus' body, with difficulty discovered and pieced together.* In extended parallel dialogue between Cadmus and Evadne the phrensy gradually passes away from her and she recognizes the deed she has done. Cadmus sums up the final situation: all the house enwrapped in one dread doom. The Chorus sympathize with Cadmus, but have no pity for Agave. She then follows with a rhesis of woe, interrupted by 1365

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Dionysus appears aloft, in divine form. The MSS. are defective here: from what we have the god appears to be painting the future of Cadmus: life in a dragon form, victories at the head of barbarian hosts, finally the Isles of the Blest. Agave as stained with blood is banished the land, vainly imploring the god's mercy. With lamentations at the thought of exile, which is the lot of both, the play ends.

PASSAGES

I

Evolution of human life

Prometheus.

List rather to the deeds

I did for mortals: how, being fools before
I made them wise and true in aim of soul,
And let me tell you — not as taunting men,
But teaching you the intention of my gifts —
How, first beholding, they beheld in vain,
And hearing, heard not, but like shapes in dreams
Mixed all things wildly down the tedious time;
Nor knew to build a house against the sun
With wicketed sides, nor any woodcraft knew,
But lived, like silly ants, beneath the ground,
In hollow caves unsunned. There came to them
No steadfast sign of winter nor of spring,
Flower perfumed, nor summer full of fruit;
But blindly and lawlessly they did all things,
Until I taught them how the stars do rise
And set in mystery, and devised for them
Number, the inducer of philosophies,
The synthesis of letters, and, beside,
The artificer of all things, Memory,
That sweet Muse-Mother. I was first to yoke
The servile beasts in couples, carrying
An heirdom of man's burdens on their backs.
I joined to chariots steeds that love the bit
They champ at — the chief pomp of golden ease.
And none but I originated ships,
The seaman's chariots wandering on the brine,
With linen wings. And I — oh miserable! —
Who did devise for mortals all these arts,
Have no device left now to save myself
From the woe I suffer.

Chorus.

Most unseemly woe

Thou sufferest, and dost stagger from the sense
Bewildered! like a bad leech falling sick,
Thou art faint at soul, and canst not find the drugs
Required to save thyself.

Prometheus.

Hearken the rest,

And marvel further, what more arts and means
I did invent, this greatest: if a man
Fell sick there was no cure, nor esculent,
Nor chrym, nor liquid, but for lack of drugs
Men pined and wasted, till I showed them all
Those mixtures of emollient remedies,
Whereby they might be rescued from disease,
I fixed the various rules of mantic art,
Discerned the vision from the common dream,
Instructed them in vocal auguries,
Hard to interpret, and defined as plain
The wayside omens — flights of crook-clawed birds —

Showed which are, by their nature, fortunate,
And which not so, and what the food of each,
And what the hates, affections, social needs,
Of all to one another,—taught what sign
Of visceral lightness, colored to a shade,
May charm the genial gods, and what fair spots
Commend the lung and liver. Burning so
The limbs encased in fat, and the long chine,
I led my mortals on to an art abstruse,
And cleared their eyes to the image in the fire,
Erst filmed in dark. Enough said now of this:
For the other helps of man hid underground,
The iron and the brass, silver and gold,
Can any dare affirm he found them out
Before me? None, I know, unless he choose
To lie in his vaunt. In one word learn the whole:
That all arts come to mortals from Prometheus.

Æschylus: Prometheus. [Mrs. Browning's translation.]

2

(For comparison with the preceding)

Warmly this argument with others oft
Have I disputed, who assert that ill
To mortal man assign'd outweighs the good.
Far otherwise I deem, that good is dealt
To man in larger portions: were it not,
We could not bear the light of life. That Power,
Whatever god he be, that called us forth
From foul and savage life, hath my best thanks.
Inspiring reason first, he gave the tongue
Articulate sounds, the intercourse of language:
The fruits of earth he gave, and to that growth
The heaven-descending rain, that from the earth,
Cheer'd by its kindly dews, they might arise,
And bear their life-sustaining food mature: to this
The warm defense against th' inclement storm
He taught to raise, and the umbrageous roof
The fiery sun excluding: the tall bark
He gave to bound o'er the wide sea, and bear
From realm to realm in grateful interchange
The fruits each wants. Is aught obscure, aught hid?
Doubts darkening on the mind the mounting blaze
Removes; or from the entrail's panting fibres
The seer divines, or from the flight of birds.
Are we not then fastidious to repine
At such a life so furnish'd by the gods?

Euripides: Suppliants 214. (Potter.)

3

Specimen of Accelerated Rhythm in the exact metre

ÆGISTHUS

How thy word and act shall issue thou shalt shortly understand.

CHORUS

Up to action, O my comrades! for the fight is hard at hand,
Swift, your right hands to the sword hilt! bare the weapon as for strife.

ÆGISTHUS

Lo! I too am standing ready, hilt to hilt, for death or life!

CHORUS

'Twas thy word and we accept it! onward to the chance of war!

CLYTEMNESTRA

Nay, enough, enough, my champion! we will smite and slay no more.
Already we have heaped enough the harvest-field of guilt,
Enough of wrong and murder, let no other blood be spilt!
Peace, old men! and pass away into the homes by fate decreed,
Lest ill valor meet our vengeance—'twas a necessary deed.
But enough of toils and troubles—be the end, if ever, now,
Ere the wrath of the Avenger deal another deadly blow.
'Tis a woman's word of warning, and let who will listen thereto.

ÆGISTHUS

But that these should loose and lavish reckless blossoms of the tongue,
And in hazard of their fortune cast upon me words of wrong,
And forget the law of subjects, and to heed their ruler's word—

CHORUS

Ruler? but 'tis not for Argives, thus to own a dastard lord!

ÆGISTHUS

I will follow to chastise thee in my coming days of sway.

CHORUS

Not if Fortune guide Orestes safely on his homeward way.

ÆGISTHUS

Ah, well I know how exiles feed on hopes of their return!

CHORUS

Feed and batten on pollution of the right, while 'tis thy turn!

ÆGISTHUS

Thou shalt pay, be well assured, heavy quittance for thy pride.

CHORUS

Crow and strut, with her beside thee, like a cock, his mate beside!

CLYTEMNESTRA

Heed not thou too highly of them—let the cur-pack growl and yell—
I and thou will rule the palace and will order all things well?

Conclusion of Agamemnon. (Morshead.)

4

Scene from the 'Hercules Mad' of Euripides

Translated by Robert Browning

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

Horror!

Are we come to the self-same passion of fear,
Old friends?—such a phantasm fronts me here
Visible over the palace-roof!
In flight, in flight, the laggard limb
Bestir, and haste aloof

From that on the roof there—grand and grim !
O Paian, king !
Be thou my safeguard from the woeful thing !

IRIS

Courage, old men ! beholding here—Night's birth—
Madness, and me the handmaid of the gods,
Iris : since to your town we come no plague—
Wage war against the house of but one man
From Zeus and from Alkmené sprung, they say.
Now, till he made an end of bitter toils
Fate kept him safe, nor did his father Zeus
Let us once hurt him, Heré nor myself.
But since he has toiled through Eurustheus' task
Heré desires to fix fresh blood on him—
Slaying his children : I desire it too.

Up then, collecting the unsoftened heart,
Unwedded virgin of black Night ! Drive, drag,
Frenzy upon the man here—whirls of brain
Big with child-murder, while his feet leap gay.
Let go the bloody cable its whole length !
So that,—when o'er the Acherousian ford
He has sent floating, by self-homicide,
His beautiful boy-garland,—he may know
First, Heré's anger, what it is to him,
And then learn mine. The gods are vile indeed
And mortal matters vast, if he 'scape free.

MADNESS

Certes, from well-born sire and mother too
Had I my birth, whose blood is Night's and Heaven's ;
But here's my glory,—not to grudge the good !
Nor love I raids against the friends of man.
I wish, then, to persuade, before I see
You stumbling, you and Heré : trust my words !
This man, the house of whom ye hound me to,
Is not unfamed on earth, nor gods among ;
Since, having quelled waste land and savage sea,
He alone raised again the falling rights
Of gods—gone ruinous through impious men.
Desire no mighty mischief, I advise !

IRIS

Give thou no thought to Heré's faulty schemes !

MADNESS

Changing her step from faulty to fault-free !

IRIS

Not to be wise, did Zeus' wife send thee here !

MADNESS

Sun, thee I cite to witness—doing what I loath to do !
But since indeed to Heré and thyself I must subserve,
And follow you quick, with a whizz, as the hounds a-hunt with the huntsman,
—Go I will ! and neither the sea, as it groans with its waves so furiously,
Nor earthquake, no, nor the bolt of thunder gasping out heaven's labor-
throe,

Shall cover the ground as I, at a bound, rush into the bosom of Herakles !
And home I scatter and house I batter,
Having first of all made the children fall,—
And he who felled them is never to know
He gave birth to each child that received the blow,
Till the Madness I am have let him go !

Ha, behold, already he rocks his head—he is off from the starting place !
Not a word, as he rolls his frightful orbs, from their sockets wrenched in
the ghastly race !
And the breathings of him he tempers and times no more than a bull in
act to toss,
And hideously he bellows invoking the Keres, daughters of Tartaros.
Ay and I soon will dance thee madder, and pipe thee quite out of thy
mind with fear !

So, up with the famous foot, thou Iris, march to Olympus, leave me here !
Me and mine, who now combine, in the dreadful shape no mortal sees,
And now are about to pass, from without, inside of the home of Herakles !

CHORAL ODE

Otototoi,—groan : Away is mown
Thy flower, Zeus' offspring, City !
Unhappy Hellas, who dost cast (the pity !)
Who worked thee all the good,
Away from thee,—destroyest in a mood
Of Madness him, to death whom pipings dance !
There goes she, in her chariot,—groans, her brood—
And gives her team the goad, as though adrift
For doom, Night's Gorgon, Madness, she whose glance
Turns man to marble ! with what hissings lift
Their hundred heads the snakes, her head's inheritance !
Quick has the god changed fortune : through their sire
Quick will the children, that he saved, expire !
O miserable me ! O Zeus ! thy child—
Childless himself—soon vengeance, hunger-wild,
Craving for punishment, will lay how low—
Loaded with many a woe !
O palace-roofs ! your courts about,
A measure begins all unrejoiced
By the tympanies and the thyrsos hoist
Of the Bromian revel-rout,
O ye domes ! and the measure proceeds
For blood, not such as the cluster bleeds
Of the Dionusian pouring-out !
Break forth ! fly, children ! fatal this—
Fatal the lay that is piped, I wis !
Ay, for he hunts a children-chase—
Never shall madness lead her revel
And leave no trace in the dwelling-place !
Ai, ai, because of the evil !
Ai, ai, the old man—how I groan
For the father, and not the father alone !
She who was nurse of his children small,—small
Her gain that they never were born at all !
See ! see !
A whirlwind shakes hither and thither

The house—the roof falls in together!
 Ha, ha, what dost thou, son of Zeus?
 A trouble of Tartaros broke loose,
 Such as once Pallas on the Titan thundered,
 Thou sendest on thy domes, roof-shattered and wall-sundered.

Ideas of Deity

5

None of mortal men
 Escape unhurt by fortune, nor the gods,
 Unless the stories of the bards be false.
 Have they not formed connubial ties to which
 No law assents? Have they not gall'd with chains
 Their fathers through ambition? Yet they hold
 Their mansions on Olympus, and their wrongs
 With patience bear. Euripides: *Hercules* 1414

6

These are your works, ye gods! these changes fraught
 With horrible confusion, mingled thus
 That we through ignorance might worship you.
 Euripides: *Hecuba* 943.

7

O supreme of heav'n,
 What shall we say? that thy firm providence
 Regards mankind? or vain the thoughts, which deem
 That the just gods are rulers in the sky,
 Since tyrant fortune lords it o'er the world? Ditto 470

8

Mortal as I am
 In virtue I exceed thee, though a god
 Of mighty pow'r; for I have not betray'd
 The sons of Hercules: well did'st thou know
 To come by stealth unto my couch, t' invade
 A bed not thine, nor leave obtain'd; to save
 Thy friends thou dost not know; thou art a god
 In wisdom or in justice little vers'd. Euripides: *Hercules* 385

9

I deem not of the gods, as having form'd
 Connubial ties to which no law assents,
 Nor as oppressed with chains: disgraceful this
 I hold, nor ever will believe that one
 Lords it o'er others: of no foreign aid
 The god, who is indeed a god, hath need:
 These are the wretched fables of the bards.
 Euripides: *Hercules* 1444

10

O Jove, who rulest the rolling of the earth,
 And o'er it hast thy throne, whoe'er thou art,
 The ruling mind, or the necessity
 Of nature, I adore thee: dark thy ways,
 And silent are thy steps; to mortal man
 Yet thou with justice all things dost ordain.
 Euripides: *Daughters of Troy* 955.

11

Was this then human, or divine?
 Did it a middle nature share?
 What mortal shall declare?
 Who shall the secret bounds define?
 When the gods work we see their pow'r;
 We see on their high bidding wait
 The prosperous gales, the storms of fate:
 But who their awful councils shall explore?
 Euripides: *Helena* 1235.

12

And those, the Ever-Virgin ones, I call,
 Erinnyes dread that see all human deeds,
 Swift-footed, that they mark how I am slain
 By you Atreidae; may they seize on them,
 Doers of evil, with all evil plagues
 And uttermost destruction.
 Sophocles: *Ajax* 937 [Plumptre].

Passing bits of Nature-Painting

13

Thou firmament of God, and swift-wing'd winds,
 Ye springs of rivers, and of ocean waves
 That smile innumerable! Mother of us all,
 O Earth, and Sun's all-seeing eye, behold,
 I pray, what I a God from Gods endure.
 Æschylus: *Prometheus* 88 [Plumptre].

14

A Sacred Spot

This spot is holy, one may clearly tell,
 Full as it is of laurel, olive, vine.
 And many a nightingale within sings sweetly.
 Rest my limbs here upon this roughly-hewn rock.
 Sophocles: *Œdipus at Colonus* 16.

15

A Grove of the Furies

Rush not on
 Through voiceless, grass-grown grove,
 Where blends with rivulet of honey'd stream
 The cup of water clear. Do. 156.

16

A Meadow of Artemis

Thee, goddess, to adorn I bring this crown
 Enwoven with the various flowers that deck
 The unshorn mead, where never shepherd dared
 To feed his flock, and the scythe never came,
 But o'er its vernal sweets unshorn the bee
 Ranges at will, and hush'd in reverence glides
 Th' irraguous streamlet: garish art hath there

No place ; of these the modest still may cull
At pleasure, interdicted to th' impure.

Euripides : *Hippolytus* 81.

17

The Nile.

These are the streams of Nile, the joy of nymphs,
Glowing with beauty's radiance ; he his floods
Swell'd with the melted snow o'er Egypt's plain
Irriguous pours, to fertilize her fields,
Th' ethereal rain supplying.

Euripides : *Helena* 1.

18

The Nightingale

On thee, high-nested in the museful shade
By close-inwoven branches made,
Thee, sweetest bird, most musical
Of all that warble their melodious song
The charmed woods among,
Thee, tearful nightingale, I call :
O come, and from thy dark-plumed throat
Swell sadly-sweet thy melancholy note.

Euripides : *Helena* 1191.

19

Flight of Cranes

O might we through the liquid sky
Wing'd like the birds of Lybia fly ;
Birds, which the change of seasons know,
And, left the wintry storms and snow,
Their leader's well-known call obey
O'er many a desert dry and cultured plain
He guides the marshall'd train,
And cheers with jocund notes their way.
Ye birds that through th' aerial height
Your course with clouds light-sailing share,
Your flight amidst the Pleiads hold,
And where Orion nightly flames in gold ;
Then on Eurota's banks alight,
And this glad message bear :
"Your king from Troy shall reach once more,
With conquest crown'd, his native shore."

Euripides : *Helena* 1603.

20

A Storm

So is it as a wave
Of ocean's billowing surge
(Where Thrakian storm-winds rave,
And floods of darkness from the depths emerge,)
Rolls the black sand from out the lowest deep,
And shores re-echoing wail, as rough blasts o'er them sweep.
Sophocles : *Antigone* 586. [Plumptre.]

21

Steering their rough course o'er this boisterous main,
Form'd in a ring beneath whose waves
The Nereid train in high-arch'd caves
Weave the light dance, and raise the sprightly song,
Whilst whisp'ring in their swelling sails
Soft Zephyrs breathe, or southern gales
Piping amidst their tackling play,
As their bark ploughs its wat'ry way
Those hoary cliffs, the haunts of birds, among,
To that wild strand, the rapid race
Where once Achilles deigned to grace.

Euripides : *Iphigenia among the Tauri* 492.

(Specimens of Gnomic Verses)

22

Amongst barbarians all are slaves, save one.

Helena 311

23

He is no lover who not always loves.

Daughters of Troy 1148.

24

What our necessities demand, becomes
Of greater moment than to conquer Troy.

Andromache 427.

25

'Tis not the counsel, but the speaker's worth,
That gives persuasion to his eloquence.

Hecuba 266.

26

Skilful leech
Mutters no spell o'er sore that needs the knife.

Ajax 581.

27

It is through God that man or laughs or mourns.

Ajax 383.

28

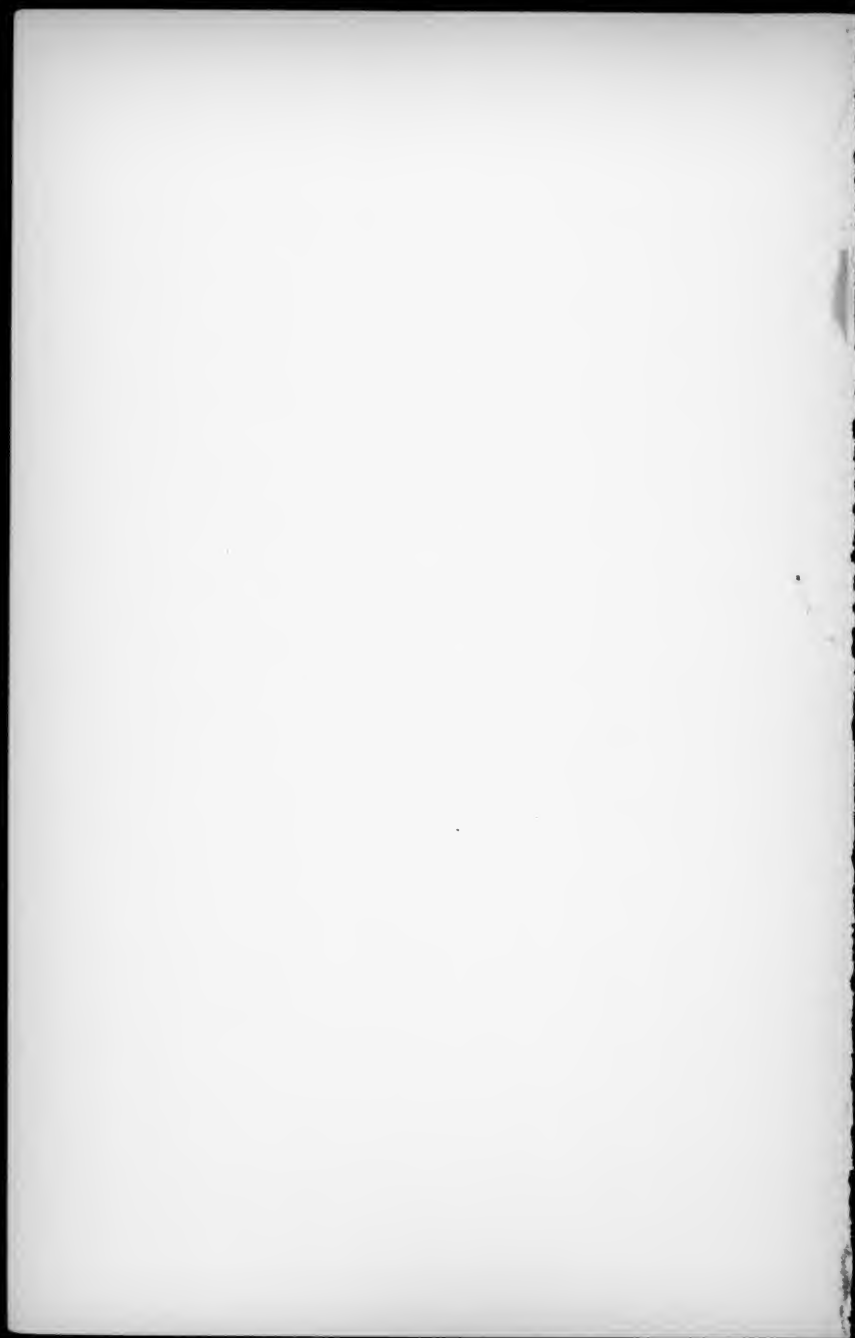
No mortal man
May therefore be call'd happy, till you see
The last of all his days, and how, that pass'd,
He to the realms of Pluto shall descend,

Andromache 114.

29

All human things
A day lays low, a day lifts up again ;
But still the gods love those of order'd soul.

Ajax 130.



Book of Illustrations
Ancient Comedy

Richard G. Moulton

ILLUSTRATIONS



THE ANCIENT DRAMA (COMEDY)

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SYLLABUS OF LECTURE-STUDIES : Ancient Comedy for English Audiences.

THE CLOUDS *

PERSONS : STREPSIADES and his son PHEIDIPPIDES — SOCRATES, CHÆREPHON, and others of his disciples — PASIAS and AMYNIAS (Creditors of Strepsiades), a Witness — personification of JUST and UNJUST ARGUMENT — CHORUS OF THE CLOUDS.

PROLOGUE

The first scene represents the Interior of Strepsiades' house at night: Str. himself in bed. He soliloquises on family troubles; especially his fast son and other expenses into which a rich match has betrayed him. He can think of no way out of the difficulty except to send his son to this new School of Socrates, where they teach legal evasion. He calls Pheidippides out of his bed to propose the plan, which Pheid. does not take to. The father trying threats, Pheid. runs off to his rich uncle Megacles. Str. resolves he will go to the School himself.

He traverses stage and knocks at Socrates' door. The initiated door-keeper says he has caused a great thought to miscarry, and the conversation between the two brings out the wonders of the new learning: measuring fleas' jumps by making wax slippers for them — getting a dinner by geometry, reinforced by stealing a cloak — here a set of students with heads on the ground and backs in the air studying 'things under ground' [Str. supposes mushrooms] — wonderful instruments [probably ridiculous utensils] for various sciences — the novel wonder a Map [which makes Str. start back at seeing how near Sparta is] — many others too coarse for mention — and above all Socrates himself in a hanging basket [hit at 'suspension of judgment'] — Str. then converses with Socrates himself, who explains as to the basket:

I walk on air and contemplate the Sun!

Str. begs he may learn Unjust Argument: he will pay any fee to his teacher, 'by the gods he will!' — 'The gods' are no longer current coin. — Then what coin have they? Byzantine iron? — Soc. bids him sit on the sacred bed with chaplet round his brow [the poor man thinks he is about to be sacrificed], while Socrates invokes the TRUE GODDESSES, HIS PATRONS, THE VIRGIN CLOUDS.

Soc. Old man sit you still, and attend to my will, and hearken in peace to my prayer.

INVOCATION OF CLOUDS

O Master and King, holding earth in your swing, O measureless infinite Air;
And thou, glowing Ether, and Clouds who enwreath her with thunder and lightning and storms,
Arise ye and shine, bright Ladies Divine, to your student in bodily forms.

Str. No, but stay, no, but stay, just one moment, I pray, while my cloak round my temples I wrap.

To think that I've come, stupid fool, from my home, without either beaver or cap!

* The quotations are from Rogers's translation.

- Soc.* Come forth, come forth, dread Clouds, and to earth your glorious majesty show;
Whether lightly ye rest on the time-honoured crest of Olympus environed in snow,
Or tread the soft dance 'mid the stately expanse of old Ocean, the nymphs to beguile,
Or stoop to enfold with your pitchers of gold the mystical waves of the Nile,
Or around the white foam of Mæotis ye roam, or Mimas all wintry and bare,
O! hear while we pray, and turn not away from the rites which your servants prepare.

Voices heard from beneath the stage

Clouds of all hue,
Rise we aloft with our garments of dew.
Come from old Ocean's unchangeable bed,
Come, till the mountain's green summits we tread,
Come to the peaks with their landscapes untold,
Gaze on the Earth with her harvests of gold,
Gaze on the rivers in majesty streaming,
Gaze on the lordly, invincible sea;
Come, for the Eye of the Ether is beaming,
Come, for all nature is flashing and free.
Let us shake off this close-clinging dew
From our members eternally new,
And sail upwards the wide world to view.
Come away! Come away!

[Throughout this and similar scenes the grand lyrics are continually interrupted by the low-souled Strepsiades, who expresses terror or other strong emotion in the same measure, but with metaphors or allusions too coarse for quotation].

Come then with me,
Daughters of Mist, to the land of the free.
Come to the people whom Pallas hath blest,
Come to the soil where the Mysteries rest;
Come, where the glorified Temple invites
The pure to partake of its mystical rites:
Holy the gifts that are brought to the Gods,
Shrines with festoons and with garlands are crowned,
Pilgrims resort to the sacred abodes,
Gorgeous the festivals all the year round,
And the Bromian rejoicings in Spring,
When the flutes with their deep music ring,
And the sweetly-toned Choruses sing.
Come away! Come away!

- Str.* O, Socrates, pray by all the Gods, say, for I earnestly long to be told,
Who are these that recite with such grandeur and might? Are they glorified mortals of old?
Soc. No mortals are there, but Clouds of the air, great Gods who the indolent fill:
These grant us discourse, and logical force, and the art of persuasion instil,

And periphrasis strange, and a power to arrange, and a marvellous judgment and skill.

- Str.* So then when I heard their omnipotent word, my spirit felt all of a flutter,
And it yearns to begin subtle cobwebs to spin, and about metaphysics to stutter;
And together to glue an idea or two, and battle away in replies:
So if it's not wrong, I earnestly long to behold them myself with my eyes.

PARODE OR CHORUS-ENTRY AND EPISODE I

At this point the Clouds become visible: in gorgeous vestments they move slowly round the Orchestra.

- Soc.* Look up in the air, toward Arnes, out there, for I see they will pitch before long
These regions about.—*Str.* Where? point me them out.
Soc. They are drifting, an infinite throng,
And their long shadows quake over valley and brake.
Str. Why, whatever's the matter to-day?
I can't see them a bit.
Soc. There, they're close by the pit.
Str. Ah, I just got a glimpse by the way.
Soc. There, now you must see how glorious they be, or your eyes must be pumpkins, I vow.
Str. Ah, I see them proceed; I should think so indeed: Great powers! they fill everything now.
Soc. So then till this day that celestials were they, you never imagined nor knew?
Str. Why no, on my word, for I always had heard they were nothing but vapour and dew.
Soc. O, then I declare, you can't be aware that 'tis these who the sophists protect,
Prophets sent beyond sea, quacks of every degree, fops signet-and-jewel-bedecked,
Astrological knaves, and fools who their staves of dithyrambs proudly rehearse,—
'Tis the Clouds who all these support at their ease, because they exalt them in verse.
Str. 'Tis for this then they write of 'the terrible might of the light-flashing, rain-splashing Cloud,'
And the 'dank-matted curls, which the Tempest God whirls,' and the 'blasts with their trumpets so loud,'
And 'birds of the sky floating upwards on high,' and 'Clouds of first water, which drown
With their soft falling dew the great Ether so blue,' and then in return they gulp down
Huge cutlets of pike, and game if they like, most delicate game in its season.

Strepsiades cannot understand how it is that they appear in the shape of women: *Soc.* reminds him how clouds can assume any shape; they take their shape from those who happen to be near them [*this gives opportunity for personalities aimed at individuals in the audience*]. *The Clouds* hail the new student, who is awe-struck.—There are no Gods but these.—Except Zeus, pleads *Streps.*, or who would send the rain?—Why these Goddesses:

did you ever know rain without clouds?—But thunder?—The motion of these, as urged by Necessity.—Yes, but does not Zeus send the necessity?—No: it is caused by a vortex.—Strepsiades sees now; Zeus is deposed and Vortex reigns in his stead.—But how about the thunderbolt and its slaying perjurers?—If it did that, how is it that Cleonymus is living? [*Another hit at a person in the audience.*] Besides it hits the gnarled oaks: have they committed perjury?

Str. Can't say that they do; your words appear true. Whence comes then the Thunderbolt, pray?

Soc. When a wind that is dry, being lifted on high, is suddenly pent unto these,

It swells up their skin, like a bladder, within, by Necessity's changeless decrees,

Till, compressed very tight, it bursts them outright, and away with an impulse so strong,

That at last, by the force and the swing of its course, it takes fire as it whizzes along.

Str. That's exactly the thing that I suffered one Spring, at the great feast of Zeus, I admit;

I'd a paunch in the pot, but I wholly forgot about making the safety-valve slit.

So it sputtered and swelled, while the saucepan I held, till at last with a vengeance it flew:

Took me quite by surprise, dirt-bespattered my eyes, and scalded my face black and blue.

Strepsiades is at last convinced and accepts the New Creed:

I believe in Wide Space, in the Clouds, in the Eloquent Tongue,

and gives himself up as their servant:

Str. So now, at your word, I give and afford

My body to these, to treat as they please,

To have and to hold, in squalour, in cold,

In hunger, and thirst; yea, by Zeus, at the worst,

To be flayed out of shape from my heels to my nape,

So along with my hide from my duns I escape:

And to men may appear without conscience or fear,

Bold, hasty and wise, a concocter of lies;

A rattler to speak, a dodger, a sneak,

A regular claw of the tables of law;

A shuffler complete, well worn in deceit.

A supple, unprincipled troublesome cheat;

A hang-dog accurst, a bore with the worst,

In the tricks of the jury-courts thoroughly versed.

If all that I meet this praise shall repeat,

Work away as you choose, I will nothing refuse,

Without any reserve, from my head to my shoes.

You shan't see me wince, though my gutlets you mince,

And these entrails of mine for a sausage combine,

Served up for the gentlemen students to dine.

At the request of the Clouds, Socrates undertakes the old man's education. He shows badly in some preliminary questions, but at last is taken inside with Socrates. *The Stage being vacant, the Chorus turns round so as to face the Audience, and proceeds to the*

PARABASIS

Parabasis Proper. The first part complains in the Author's name of the blunder of the audience in passing over the Author's previous play, brought out under an assumed name, like a bantling its mother is ashamed to rear. A second one so brought out has met with a worthier fate; and the present is a sister-play.

Now then comes its sister hither, like Electra in the play,
Comes in earnest expectation kindred minds to meet to-day:
She will recognize full surely, if she find, her brother's tress.
And observe how pure her morals: who, to notice first her dress,
Enters not with filthy symbols on her modest garments hung,
Jeering bald-heads, dancing ballets, for the laughter of the young.
In this play no wretched grey-beard with a staff his fellow pokes,
So obscuring from the audience all the poorness of his jokes;
No one rushes in with torches, no one groans, 'Oh dear! Oh dear!'
Trusting in its genuine merits comes this play before you here.

They go on to contrast (in the Author's name) his plays with his rivals'. A *Strophe* follows: invocation to Zeus and Ether in short lines. The *After-speech* comes next, which, as usual, attacks some public folly:

O most sapient, wise spectators, hither turn attention due,
We complain of sad ill-treatment, we've a bone to pick with you:
We have ever helped your city, helped with all our might and main;
Yet you pay us no devotion, that is now why we complain,
We who always watch around you. For if any project seems
Ill-concocted, then we thunder, then the rain comes down in streams.
And remember, very lately, how we knit our brows together,
'Thunders crashing, lightnings flashing,' never was such awful weather;
And the Moon in haste eclipsed her, and the Sun in anger swore
He would curl his wick within him and give light to you no more,
Should you choose that cursed reptile, Cleon, whom the Gods abhor,
Tanner, Slave, and Paphlagonian, to lead out your hosts to war.
Yet you chose him! Yet you chose him! For they say that folly grows
Best and finest in this city; but the gracious Gods dispose
Always all things for the better, causing errors to succeed:
And how this sad joke may profit, surely he who runs may read.
Let the Cormorant be convicted, in command, of bribes and theft,
Let us have him gagged and muzzled, in the pillory chained and left.
Then again, in ancient fashion, all that ye have erred of late,
Will turn out your own advantage, and a blessing to the state.

After an *Antistrophe* [same metre as *Strophe*]: invocation to various gods: we have next the *After-response*.

We, when we had finished packing and prepared our journey down,
Met the Lady Moon, who charged us with a message for your town:

She saves you a drachm a month for torchlight, and yet you never observe
the days which it is her special function to mark; but you are wrangling in
law courts when you ought to be keeping sacred Festivals;

And, she says, the gods in chorus shower reproaches on her head,
When in bitter disappointment they go supperless to bed.

If you do not amend there will be terrible consequences—as happened
lately with Hyperbolus [*another personality*].

EPISODE II

The Parabasis concludes, the Scene resumes. Socrates and his new pupil appear, the former swearing by Chaos, Air, and Respiration that Streps. is the greatest dolt he ever taught. The lesson goes on; at first as to some niceties of grammar [not capable of being rendered in English], by which Str. learns he must speak of 'fowl' and 'fowless,' must call 'trough' 'troughness,' which on trying to expand into a principle, he finds will oblige him to speak in future of "Miss Cleonymus" [another personality]. Then he is forced to get into a bed [none of the cleanliest] to force his brain, and by this means to think out what he is most anxious about—devices against debts. His first thought is to hire a witch and conjure down the moon, without which interest could not be calculated. Next he brings out the idea of a burning glass, to be used in court to destroy the documentary evidence. This pleases Socrates: but his next suggestion, to escape the appearing in court at all by simply hanging himself, is too much for the Master, who will have nothing more to do with him. He is in great distress, but by advice of the Clouds goes off to find his son, who may prove not too old to learn. Observe the ambiguous address of Chorus to Socrates:

Dost thou not see how bounteous we our favors free
Will shower on you?
Since whatsoever your will prepare
This dupe will do.

But now that you have dazzled and elated so your man,
Make haste and seize whate'er you please as quickly as you can,
For cases such as these, my friend, are very prone to change and bend.

Re-enter Str., dragging his unwilling son, who scorns his father's glorious account of the new wonders he has learned, and is not impressed with 'troughness' or King Vortex. Socrates doubts if he can do much with one who says 'suthpended,' but the father says he is sharp enough: he used to build dear little baby-houses and frame frogs out of peach-stones, when a boy.

The question now becomes whether he shall learn the Just or Unjust Argument: and the two are summoned to appear and debate, that the boy may judge for himself. After a preliminary exchange of abuse:

Unjust Argument. You musty old dame!

Just Argument. You monster in shame!

Unj. Hey! roses, I swear! *Just.* You lickspittle there!

Unj. What, lillies from you! *Just.* You're a parricide, too!

Unj. You shower gold on my head. *Just.* But it used to be lead.

Unjust. But now its a grace and a glory instead.

Just. You're a little too bold. *Unjust.* You're a great deal too old, &c.

Just Argument plants the simplicity of life and manner when he was believed in, in the good old times, when young people were modest, and learned the precepts which taught

The heroes of old to be hardy and bold, and the men who at Marathon fought.

If Pheidip. will listen to him, he shall be blooming, athletic, and fair; and instead of wasting his strength in musty law courts, he shall excel in the friendly athletic rivalry of the Academe:

All fragrant with yew and leisure time too, and the leaf which the white poplars fling,

When the plane whispers love to the elm in the grove in the beautiful season of Spring.

The Chorus applaud, but turn to *Unjust Argument*, who manifests great disgust at this picture and proceeds to pull it to pieces.—You object to warm baths as enervating: was Hercules enervated, and are not the baths of Hercules the best warm baths in Athens? &c. What is the good e. g. of modesty? If caught, plead that Zeus himself is not famous for modesty.—But, urges *Just Argument*, suppose you are convicted and branded as a Rogue? and offers to stake the whole dispute on this argument.—This difficulty is met and the victory decided by the favourite appeal to personalities: Where do your great statesmen come from?—The class of branded Rogues?—Your Orators and Poets?—Branded Rogues again!—If you still doubt, look at—the Audience! and *Just Argument* gives up as his rival runs through name after name, all branded as Rogues.—Thus *Pheidip.* becomes the pupil of *Unjust Argument*: the Chorus however hinting he may repent before long.

CHORAL INTERACT

The blessings the Clouds will bestow upon Athens if they gain the prize: all countries shall wait till they have poured the rain upon Athenian fields; they will guard her from drought and sling hailstones at her enemies.

FINALE

Strepsiades returns to see how his son is getting on, especially as 'Settling day' [called in Greek 'Old and New day'] is near. He hears with delight of his son's progress, and as first-fruits learns from him that a day cannot be old and new at the same time, any more than a woman can be old and young. With rapture he hurls this at Pasiast, a creditor who comes with his bill, makes general fun of him, and finally trying him with the 'troughness' question declares he will not pay at all a man so ignorant.—A second creditor comes and he tries him with a question whether the rain falls fresh each time, or the new rain is the old drawn up by the Sun: when he finds he cares nothing about this, he refuses to pay one so unenlightened in the Laws of Nature. Moreover how can Money increase by Interest when the Sea itself grows no larger for all the Rivers that run into it?—In triumph he goes in with his son, the Chorus prophesying a reaction—which appears when the father comes rushing out, the son beating him violently: they had had a talk, in which the son sneered at Æschylus, and began a 'shameful tale' from Euripides, which the father could bear no longer and struck his son: the son instead of submitting, had dared to strike his own father! The son proceeds to justify himself, answering his father's appeals to his early care for his son in his helpless infancy by the argument that his father used to beat him as a child, and as age is a second childhood it is only fair that he should beat his father now!—In horror Strep. turns to the Clouds:

O Clouds! O Clouds! I owe all this to you!
Why did I let you manage my affairs?

Chor. Nay, nay, old man, you owe it to yourself;
Why did'st thou turn to wicked practices?

Str. Ah! but ye should have asked me that before,
And not have spurred a poor old fool to evil.

Chor. Such is our plan. We find a man
On evil thoughts intent;
Guide him along to shame and wrong,
Then leave him to repent.

Strepsiades, in despair, at last rushes out and brings in a crew of neighbours who pull down *Socrates'* house, burn it, and turn the Great Master and his students into the street. *Socrates* rushes out and seeks *Strepsiades* :

Soc. Hallo! What are you at up on our roof?

Str. I walk on air and contemplate the sun!

The rioters pitilessly turn them out and —

spare them not for many reasons,

BUT MOST BECAUSE THEY HAVE BLASPHEMED THE GODS,

and the Chorus mark the conclusion with the words

I think we may say

We have acted our part pretty middling to-day.

THE BIRDS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.—TALKOVER [Peisthetærus] and his companion HOPEFUL [Euelpides] — KING HOOPOE of the Birds, and CHORUS of Birds, his subjects, RUNNERBIRD [Trochilus] his valet.—Deities: PROMETHEUS, NEPTUNE [or POSEIDON], TRIBALLUS [a barbarian deity], IRIS.—A Priest, A Poet, KINESIAS a dithyrambic poet, A Soothsayer, METON an Astronomer, An Athenian Commissioner, A Vendor of Decrees, A (would-be) Parricide, An Informer, Messengers, &c.

The Scene represents open country, rocky, with a grove in the centre. Talkover and Hopeful are discovered wandering about as if they had lost their way, one holding a jackdaw, the other a raven, to which they seem to be looking for directions.

PROLOGUE

The conversation between Talkover and Hopeful brings out that they are in search of the Hoopoe, once a human king, Tereus, but transformed [in one of Sophocles' tragedies] into a king of birds. By advice of the poulterer, Philocrates, they had taken these two birds for their guides, who are now betraying them by giving hopelessly contradictory directions.—Suddenly turning to the spectators *Hopeful* begins to explain the plot: how they are seeking a new country—not that Athens is not the most glorious city in the world (in which to lose a fortune over law-suits), but they prefer comfort to glory. *Talkover* perceives that the birds are now agreeing to point in one direction: accordingly they knock at the bare rock, which opens, and *Runnerbird* enquires who they are. Mutual embarrassment, after which the valet consents to call his royal master from his siesta after a meal of myrtle-berries and ants. The HOOPOE enters, the two men are terribly alarmed at his enormous beak and crest: he seems to feel this as a slight, and lays the blame on Sophocles who so dramatised him. When he has heard their story he enquires why they have come to him for information.

Hopeful: Because you were a man, and so are we; you used to run in debt, and so do we; you chuckled when you escaped paying, and so do we!

Moreover in all their flying about the birds must have discovered such a city of ease, if there be one: a city where there will be no strife, save when a host angrily bids you come earlier to a feast, or a father reproaches you for not courting his pretty daughter. The conversation is running on, with the usual topical hits and personalities, when *Talkover* is suddenly struck with a profound thought—what the race of birds might do if they only realized their position! At the risk of screwing Hoopoe's neck off he makes him look up, down, all round, and tells him he may be the practical ruler of all he sees. For the birds hold a strategic position that commands the universe—the line of passage between earth and heaven. If they found a city and fortify their atmosphere they will be able to bring both gods and men to their own terms. From men they can hide heaven like a locust cloud, while if the gods prove stubborn, they can starve them out by intercepting the smoke of human sacrifices on which they feed.—*Hoopoe* swears by "snares, meshes, and nets" it is the best idea he ever heard, and

prepares to summon his subjects to hear the project from the projector's own lips. [*Basis of Plot.*]

INVOCATION OF CHORUS

Hoopoe goes back into the grove, from which he is heard (*in lyrical measure*) rousing the Nightingale to summon the birds to a conference. *A flute performance follows (by an Athenian prima donna lately returned from abroad) intended for the Nightingale's call. Hoopoe* follows this up by a second Lyrical Invocation to the Birds his subjects.

HOPOE

Epopopopopopopopopopopoi,
Holloa! holloa! what ho! what ho!
Hither haste, my plume-partakers;
Come many, come any
That pasture on the farmer's well-sown acres,
Tribes countless that on barley feed,
And clans that gather out the seed;
Come, alert upon the wing,
Dulcet music uttering:
Ye that o'er the furrowed sod
Twitter upon every clod,
Making all the air rejoice
With your soft and slender voice:
Tio, tio, tio, tio, tio, tio, tio,
Ye that feast on garden fruits,
Nestling 'midst the ivy shoots:
Ye that all the mountains throng,
Olive-croppers, arbut-loppers,
Haste and fly to greet my song.
Trioto, trioto, totobrix!
Ye that o'er the marshy flats
Swallow down the shrill-mouthed gnats;
Ye that haunt the deep-dew'd ground,
Marathon's sweet meads around,
Ouzel, and thou of the speckled wing,
Hazelhen, hazelhen, speed while I sing.
Come many, come any,
With the halcyon brood that sweep
Surges of the watery deep,
Come and list to novel words,
Which to hear, from far and near
We gather all the tribes of neck-extending birds.
Here is arrived a sharp old man
Of revolutionary mind,
To revolutionary deeds inclined;
Come all and listen to his plan.*

Strange cries of birds are heard in the distance, and there follows the

PARODE OR CHORUS-ENTRY

This is a grand pantomimic tour-de-force. The twenty-four members of the Chorus enter as birds, got up in splendid array, and on a colossal scale. They enter singly, or in groups, giving scope to the human on-lookers to

* From Professor Kennedy's translation.

make free comments (including applications to the spectators in the theatre or to public characters). The scene is in *accelerated rhythm*, interrupted by bits of *lyric excitement* on the part of the Chorus, who, instead of falling in with their monarch's view, cry out that he has betrayed them to their natural enemies, mankind. A fight seems imminent, and the Birds form in order for charging.

Upon them! at them! in a ring
Encircle them with bloody force,
Make onslaught with embattled wing!
For these two men must die of course,
And glut my beak with prey.
No gloomy glen is there, nor airy cloud,
Nor hoary sea that can their persons shroud,
And let them get away.
Pluck them; tear them; bite them, scare them:
do not let us be afraid.
Where is he who should command us?
let him lead the light brigade.*

Talkover and *Hopeful* have the presence of mind to arm themselves with a spit for spear, and vinegar-cruet and bowl for shields: but before the hostile forces meet *Hoopoe* manages to calm down his comrades' suspicions, and they gradually assume a more peaceful attitude, and prepare to listen to *Talkover's* proposal. (Thus the metre at the conclusion is *Blank Verse*.)

EPISODE I

In a formal oration (*long anapasts*) *Talkover* puts his project: the formality of his speech being constantly relieved by running comments of a farcical nature by his companion *Hopeful*. *Talkover* begins with the ancient dignity of the birds. He quotes Aesop's fable of the lark, who buried its father in its own head because there was no earth to bury him in, as evidence of the antiquity of the race of birds: their authority is seen in the way in which all the working-classes obey the cock's call to labour in the morning. Then he dwells upon their wrongs: men snare and trap them, and take them in heaps; they buy and sell them, and feel them all over; they not only roast them, but, adding insult to injury, pour over them scalding sauce. The birds are easily worked up to a *burst of lyric indignation*. Then comes the orator's remedy. Let them build a city of the birds, and wall up the air all round, like Babylon. Then send heralds to the gods and dictate terms. Men shall hereafter sacrifice to birds at the same time as to gods: a sacrifice to Venus shall be accompanied with an offering of wheat to the coot; or if a ram is offered to Jove, a male ant must be presented to king Wren. If the gods resist, declare a Sacred War, and blockade them when they wish to make their love-visits to earth. If men resist, swallows can pick up all their seed, crows peck out the eyes of cattle, and locusts eat up their vines; on the other hand, if they are obedient, the birds can offer them good 'auguries,' pointing out treasures, and favorable seasons for sailing, besides granting a century or two of long life out of their own endless years. *Talkover* perorates (*in short anapasts*) on the economy of such divine institutions: no expensive temples to be reared, but they will dwell in thickets and olive-trees, and for offerings accept sprinklings of wheat. The Chorus accept the proposal with enthusiasm; and (*the metre changing to blank verse*) preparations are made for carrying it out. But

* From Mr. Rudd's translation.

first the two human friends of the birds are taken inside to be feasted and furnished with wings; while the nightingale shall fill up the interval.—*The flutist appears as a nightingale*, and the play proceeds to its

PARABASIS

The *Lyric Introduction* is a summons to the flutist to perform.

(*Kommation*)

O my ownie, O my brownie,
Bird of birds the dearest,
Voice that mingling with my lays
Ever was the clearest;
Playmate of my early days,
Still to me the nearest,
Nightingale; thus again
Do I meet thee, do I greet thee,
Bringing to me thy sweet strain?
Skilfullest of artists thou
To soft trillings of the flute
Vernal melodies to suit,
Our homily demands thy prelude now.*

After her *flute solo* there follows the *Parabasis Proper* (in long anapæsts). The Chorus in this case retain their characterization, and their theme is the supremacy of birds over men.

(*Parabasis Proper*)

Ho! ye men, dim-lived by nature, closest to the leaves in feature,
Feeble beings, clay-create, shadowy tribes inanimate,
Wingless mortals, in a day, doleful, dream-like, swept away;
Note the lessons that we give, we the immortals form'd to live,
We the ethereal, the unaged, with undying plans engaged.

Taking advantage of the theory of a reigning philosopher, which evolved the universe out of wind as the embryo of all things, they substituted 'egg' for embryo, and so make out a bird-origin for the world.

Chaos was and Night of yore in the time all times before,
And black Erebus beside Tartarus extending wide.
Earth, Air, Heaven were yet unknown, in huge Erebus alone
First, our oldest legend says, black-wing'd Night a wind-egg lays;
Which, as circling seasons move, brings to birth the charmer Love,
Bright, with golden wings behind, semblant to the whirling wind.
In the vast Tartarean shade him the dull dark Chaos made
Sire of us: we nestled there till we saw the light of air.
Race immortal there was none till Love's sorcery was begun:
But, when all things mixed in motion, rose the sky, the earth, the ocean,
And the blessed gods were made, everlasting, undecay'd.

Again playing upon the idea of 'augury,' they represent birds as the source of all material comfort.

Mortal men for their convenience
owe to us well-nigh everything.

* This and the two quotations that follow it are from Professor Kennedy's translation.

First we announce to them the Seasons,
such as Autumn, Winter and Spring.
When the crane departs for Lybia
then the sowing they know is to do;
Then the seaman, hanging his rudder,
settles to sleep for the whole night through.
Then should they weave a coat for Orestes,
Lest in the cold he be driven to steal.
Afterwards comes the kite, another
change in the time of year to reveal;
Then from the sheep you take its spring fleece;
after that comes the swallow to say,
Sell your great coat and provide some
dress that is fit for midsummer day.
Ammon, Delphi, and Dodona,
Phœbus Apollo are we to you.
'What do the Birds say' is the question
first to be answered whatever you do.
Whether it be to buy or sell: or
earn your living or take to a wife;
Everything is 'a bird' to you that
betrays the shadow of coming life;
A phrase, a sneeze, two people meeting,
a sound, a slave, an ass is a 'bird.'
So, that we are your prophet Apollo,
is too clear for another word.
Take us as Gods, and for your uses
You will have in us prophets, Muses,
Winter, summer, wind and weather,
To your liking altogether.
We shall not retire for state
Up to the clouds like Jove the Great:
But residing handily by you
We shall hear and not deny you
All that you may wish to possess;
Health and wealth and happiness,
Length of days, a state of peace,
Laughter that shall never cease,
Constant feasting, dances, youth,
With milk of birds; so that in truth
You and your heirs
Shall have no cares
But how to live
On the very abundance of wealth we give.*

The *Strophe* follows, reproducing the lofty rhythms of old Phrynichus, amid an accompaniment of bird-twittering (which the reader must imagine).

† Muse, that in the deep recesses
Of the forest's dreary shade,
Vocal with our wild addresses,
Or in the lonely lowly glade,
Attending near, art pleased to hear

* From Mr. Rudd's translation.

† From this point to the end of the play the quotations are from Frere's translation.

Our humble bill tuneful and shrill,
 When to the name of Omnipotent Pan,
 Our notes we raise, or sing in praise,
 Of mighty Cybele, from whom we began,
 Mother of Nature, and every creature,
 Winged or unwinged, of birds or man :
 Aid and attend, and chant with me
 The music of Phrynichus, open and plain,
 The first that attempted a loftier strain,
 Ever busy like the bee, with the sweets of harmony.

The *After-speech* puts, in pure farcical style, conveniences of birds' ways. People whom the law interferes with in this world might be free amid the birds :

Here by law 'tis very bad if a youngster beats his dad :
 Where with us 'tis usual rather, even grand, to cuff a father,
 Strutting up and crying, 'Sir, if you'll fight me, lift your spur.'

The *Antistrophe* continues the *Strophe* :

Thus the swans in chorus follow,
 On the mighty Thracian stream,
 Hymning their eternal theme,
 Praise to Bacchus and Apollo :
 The welkin rings with sounding wings,
 With songs and cries and melodies
 Up to the thunderous æther ascending :
 Whilst all that breathe on earth beneath,
 The beasts of the wood the plain and the flood,
 In panic amazement are crouching and bending,
 With the awful qualm of a sudden calm
 Ocean and air in silence blending,
 The ridge of Olympus is sounding on high,
 Appalling with wonder the lords of the sky.
 And the Muses and Graces
 Enthroned in their places,
 Join in the solemn symphony.

So the *After-response* continues the *After-speech*. A spectator, who is tired of the play, might if he had wings, just fly home, get a bit and snack, and come back fresh.

Flying off with good success crowns a lover's happiness.
 If he spies his rival here in the senatorial tier,
 He can spread his wings and fly, love-directed, through the sky,
 Keep his happy tryst, and then fly into his seat again.

EPISODE II

Talkover and *Hopeful* reappear in bird costume, and discuss with *Hoopoe*. (in *blank verse*) the founding of the new city. First its name is solemnly settled 'Cuckooborough-on-Cloud' [Nephelococcuguia]. Guardian deities and other officers are selected. Preparation is made for the solemn initiatory sacrifices ; but these are perpetually interrupted by arrivals of persons anxious to have a hand in or to oppose the new project. A *Priest* comes first with a scraggy goat : he is allowed to officiate. He has scarcely begun when a *Poet* follows, reciting fragments of lyrics he has already begun to compose on the new city. As with Pindar's, his sublime lyrics contain hints that gifts would not be unacceptable, and *Talkover* manages this

economically by making the Priest strip and give up his garments to the Poet. Then follow, one after another a *Prophet* with a bag of oracles, an *Astronomer* with instruments for street-mensuration, a *Commissioner* from the mother city to the new colony, a *Hawker* of Decrees—all of which are made to furnish 'knock-about business,' being first 'chaffed' and then thrashed by Talkover off the stage. But finally the latter has to give up his attempt and complete the sacrifice indoors.

SECOND (PARTIAL) PARABASIS

There is first a *Strophe*, putting the rights of birds in queer metre, supposed to suggest birds' attempts at human verse :

CHORUS

Henceforth—our worth,
 Our right—our might,
 Shall be shown,
 Acknowledged, known ;
 Mankind shall raise
 Prayers, vows, praise,
 To the birds alone.
 Our employ is to destroy
 The vermin train,
 Ravaging amain
 Your fruits and grain :
 We're the wardens
 Of your gardens,
 To watch and chase
 The wicked race,
 And cut them shorter,
 In hasty slaughter.

In the *After-speech* the Chorus attack (in *accelerated rhythm*) their mortal enemy, the fashionable poulterer Philocrates, and offer a reward for him alive or dead :

He, that ortolans and quails to market has presumed to bring,
 And the sparrows, six a penny, tied together in a string,
 With a wicked art retaining sundry doves in his employ,
 Fastened, with their feet in fetters, forced to serve for a decoy.

All spectators keeping birds in cages are bidden to let them free.—The *Antistrophe* pictures the allurements of bird life

Blest are they,
 The birds alway,
 With perfect clothing,
 Fearing nothing,
 Cold or sleet or summer heat.
 As it chances,
 As he fancies,
 Each his own vagary follows,
 Dwelling in the dells and hollows ;
 When with eager, weary strain
 The shrilly grasshoppers complain,
 Parched upon the sultry plain,
 Maddened with the raging heat,
 We secure a cool retreat,

In the shady nooks and coves,
Recesses of the sacred groves;
Many a herb, and many a berry,
Serves to feast, and make us merry.

The *After-response* promises bird gifts, and threatens bird penalties, to the judges, according as the poet shall win or lose the prize.

EPISODE III

Enter *Talkover* to pronounce the sacrifices propitious. He is joined by a *Messenger* who reports the marvellous rapidity with which the new city has been built. Thirty thousand cranes of Libya swallowed stones for the foundations, cornrails chiselled the stones with their bills, river-fowl carried the water, and geese used their feet as shovels to make mortar with, ducks clambered up the ladders and laid bricks, and wood-peckers were the carpenters. The strength of the fortifications has scarcely been described when a *Second Messenger* enters with news that the blockade has already been broken by *Iris*, messenger of the gods: thirty thousand light-armed hawks are sent in pursuit of her. After a brief *strophe* of defiance by the Chorus, *Iris* is seen flying across the scene, in a grotesque costume that suggests a ship in full sail: *Talkover* hails her and bids her stop, while a guard of birds enforces his command. A dialogue follows, contemptuous on both sides. *Iris* is on her father Jupiter's business, and scouts the idea of asking passports from any one. *Talkover* says if he did his duty he would have to put her to death.

Iris. But I'm immortal.

Talk. That would make no difference.

Finally, as he cannot stop her, he 'shoo's' her off like a trespassing bird, to her great indignation.—Then enters the *Herald* sent to mankind, with news of their complete and joyful submission: birds have become all the rage, he says; and Athenian family names are punned upon to show this. The metre breaks into *lyrics*, as *Talkover* and the Chorus prepare bundles of wings for the mortals who will presently claim the rights of citizenship.—This is a transition to the next division of the long Episode, in which successively, a would-be *Parricide*, *Kinesias* a dithyrambic poet, and an *Informer*, come to claim wings and the franchise: to keep up the idea of reversal of all things the first is fairly received and given a military command, while the other two, after some badgering, are horsewhipped back again.

CHORAL ODE

In this interlude the Chorus begin to tell of the unknown marvels which birds in their flight behold: these marvels unexpectedly turn out local allusions.

Strophe

We have flown, and we have run,
Viewing marvels, many a one,
In every land beneath the sun.

But the strangest sight to see
Was a huge exotic tree
Growing without heart or pith,
Weak and sappy like a withe,
But, with leaves and boughs withal,
Comely, flourishing, and tall.

This the learned all ascribe
To the sycophantic tribe;
But the natives there, like us,
Call it a Cleonymus.
In the spring's delightful hours,
It blossoms with rhetoric flowers.
I saw it standing in the field,
With leaves in figure like a shield;
On the first tempestuous day,
I saw it cast those leaves away.

Antistrophe

There lies a region out of sight,
Far within the realm of night,
Far from torch and candle light.
There in feasts of meal and wine
Men and demi-gods may join,
There they banquet, and they dine,
Whilst the light of day prevails.
At sunset, their assurance fails;
If any mortal then presumes,
Orestes, sallying from the tombs,
Like a fierce heroic sprite,
Assaults and strips the lonely wight.

EPISODE IV

Enter *Prometheus*, disguised with mufflers and carrying an umbrella. He appears in great terror lest Zeus should see him, and does not feel comfortable till he has put up his umbrella between himself and heaven. He is acting his traditional part as the friend of mortals, and comes to give them secret information, that the gods are dreadfully distressed by the blockade, and, if the birds hold out, must yield to their terms. But they must be sure to insist upon one condition: that Jupiter gives up *Queenie* [Basileia], the damsel who keeps his thunder-closet and looks after his whole government: she will make a nice wife for *Talkover*.

STROPHE (FOR INTERLUDE)

This continues the effect of the last Choral Ode.

CHORUS

Beyond the navigable seas,
Among the fierce Antipodes,
There lies a lake, obscure and holy,
Lazy, deep, melancholy,
Solitary, secret, hidden,
Where baths and washing are forbidden.
Socrates, beside the brink,
Summons from the murky sink
Many a disembodied ghost;
And Pisander reached the coast,
To raise the spirit, that he lost,
With a victim, strange and new,
A gawky camel, which he slew,
Like Ulysses — whereupon,

The grizzly sprite of Chærephon
Flitted round him, and appeared
With his eyebrows and his beard,
Like a strange infernal fowl,
Half a vampire, half an owl.

EPISODE V

Enter as ambassadors from Heaven, Neptune, Hercules and the Triballian Deity. The last is treated as a sort of barbarian ally of the gods, of whom the other two are ashamed. He speaks unintelligibly, and will not keep his robes straight. Neptune is of course of the highest divine family, while Hercules is one who becomes ambassador for the sake of the feasting and fêtes. *Talkover* understands their respective positions, and affects not to notice their approach, while he is giving orders about cooking, the steam of which is making Hercules anxious for a speedy settlement. Under such circumstances they speedily agree to terms and form an alliance: the barbarian assenting in gibberish which is interpreted as assent. At the last moment *Talkover* recollects the condition about *Queenie*: at the mention of which *Neptune* indignantly breaks off the negotiation. *Talkover* calmly goes on with his cooking, and hungry *Hercules* protests. But *Neptune* rallies him on risking his own reversion in Jupiter's sovereignty for the sake of a meal. *Talkover* hears this and taking *Hercules* aside, warns him that his uncle is making a tool of him; that he will get nothing by inheritance from Jupiter since he is illegitimate — the 'son of a foreign woman.' He appeals to him as to whether his father has ever shown him to the wardmen, or taken the other legal steps to make him his heir. Hercules confesses that nothing of the kind has been done, and indignantly makes common cause with the birds. Thus two of the embassy are disagreed: the casting-vote lies with the barbarian, who is appealed to for his opinion.

Triballian. Me tell you; pretty girl, grand beautiful queen,
Give him to birds.

Herc. Aye, give her up, you mean.

Nep. Mean! He knows nothing about it. He means nothing
But chattering like a magpie.

Talk. Well, "the magpies."
He means, the magpies or the birds in general.

Neptune is forced to be content with this: the treaty is made and the ambassadors go in to the feast.

ANTISTROPHE* (FOR INTERLUDE)

Along the Sycophantic shore,
And where the savage tribes adore
The waters of the Clepsydra,†
There dwells a nation, stern and strong,
Armed with an enormous tongue,
Wherewith they smite and slay:

With their tongues, they reap and sow,
And gather all the fruits that grow,
The vintage and the grain;
Gorgias is their chief of pride.

* In the original the arrangement of lines is antistrophic.

† The water-clock used in Athenian law-courts.

And many more there be beside,
Of mickle might and main.

Good they never teach, nor show
But how to work men harm and woe,
Unrighteousness and wrong;
And hence the custom doth arise,
When beasts are slain in sacrifice,
We sever out the tongue.

EXODUS

A Messenger announces the approach of *Queenie*: she is seen descending from heaven, amidst gorgeous spectacular effects: the rest of the play consists of the *wedding procession, and hymeneal lyrics.*

LYSISTRATA

NOTE.—This brilliant play is another manifesto of the peace party. It is from its coarseness unreadable in a literal translation, but has been made presentable in the beautiful version of Rogers, from which the quotations that follow are taken. The play is technically of great importance, its choral effects being unique.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.—LYSISTRATA and various other women representing all the principal states of Greece—Athenian Magistrate and his officers, Various Athenians, Lacedæmonian Herald and Ambassadors—CHORUS OF ATHENIAN WOMEN—CHORUS OF ATHENIAN MEN.

Scene: In front of the gates of the Acropolis at Athens

PROLOGUE

Lysistrata is, after an interval, joined by women she has secretly summoned from all cities of Greece to hear a grand scheme by which they, women as they are, can put an end to this horrid war, and enjoy family life again. Amid much discussion and excitement she propounds her idea, which is that all the women of Greece shall strike, and have nothing to do with their husbands or lovers till these promise to bring about peace.

For if we women will but sit at home,
Powder'd and trimmed, clad in our daintiest lawn,
Employing all our charms, and all our arts
To win men's love, and when we've won it, then
Repel them, firmly, till they end the war,
We'll soon get Peace again, be sure of that.

[*Thus basis of plot opened.*] The women agree, not without considerable reluctance and misgiving:

Eh, but suppose they leave us altogether!

They bind themselves by an oath with the usual formalities of swearing alliance, except that, as a shield is part of the ritual, they prefer to swear this oath of peace over a wine-bottle, of which they drink with great devotion. A cry of women's voices within the Acropolis gives evidence that part of Lysistrata's conspiracy is successful, and that the band of elderly women to whom she has committed the task have, under pretence of a women's sacrifice, seized the citadel. They all separate to carry out their respective parts in the plot.

PARODE OR CHORUS-ENTRY

Enter the orchestra, on the left, to a rhythm of long iambs, antiphonal in parts, the Chorus of Men, carrying logs of wood and pans of smoking charcoal. This entrance-ode tells of their purpose, to burn the conspirators out of the citadel; and of their indignation at the task, toiling up the steep hill at their age, with heavy burdens, all on account of these shameless women.

But over this snubby protruding steep
Ere we reach our goal at the Castle keep,

We've still, with our burdensome load, to creep.
And how to manage that blunt incline
Without a donkey, I can't divine.
Dear, how these two great fire-logs make my wearied shoulders toil and ache.
But still right onwards we needs must go,
And still the cinders we needs must blow,
Else, we'll find the fire extinguish'd, ere we reach our journey's end.
Puff! Puff! Puff!
O the smoke! the smoke!

At the end of their song they spread the logs and prepare to fire them. Just then *enter the orchestra on the right a Chorus of Women bearing pitchers of water.* They are hastening to the defence of citadel, and fear they may be too late.

Yea, for hither, they state,
Dotards are dragging to burn us,
Logs of enormous weight,
Fit for a bath-room furnace,
Vowing to roast and to slay
Sternly the reprobate women. O Lady Goddess, I pray,
Ne'er may I see them in flames! I hope to behold them with gladness,
Hellas and Athens redeeming from battle and murder and madness.

EPISODE I

Suddenly the two Chorus face one another, and exchange of defiance begins (still in long iambs). From hard words the men begin to threaten blows, the women dare them to carry out their threats. A man makes an attempt, which is the signal for volleys of water out of the buckets, with which the Chorus of Men are drenched to the skins, and their charcoal pans extinguished. At the height of the tumult *enter a Magistrate and Officers: the metre changing to blank verse.* After in a lordly way dealing out censure to both parties he proceeds to assert the majesty of the law, when *Lysistrata enters from the citadel* and confronts him. He orders an officer to arrest her. But another woman comes out to tackle the officer, and when she is ordered into custody yet another is at hand to confront the second officer: and so on, till a whole crowd of women have poured forth from the gates, and a general scrimmage with the guard takes place, *Lysistrata* cheering on her companions:

Forth to the fray, dear sisters, bold allies!
O egg-and-seed-and-pot-herb-market-girls,
O garlic-selling-barmaid-baking-girls,
Charge to the rescue, smack and whack, and thwack them.

The women so far hold their own that the two parties pause, and have a parley on more equal terms (*in anapests, with occasional antiphonal passages by the Chorus*). In a long and spirited dialogue, *Lysistrata* points out that the old theory has been that war is man's business, and if women offer a word of advice they are told to hold their tongues and mind their spinning. But now all that is to be changed.—The testy Magistrate at this point waxes so indignant in his interruptions that some of the girls dance round him (the conversation going on just the same), and, before he knows what is being done, have thrown their wimples and wraps over him and put a spindle into his hand, and made him an image of a spinning woman, to enforce *Lysistrata's*

War shall be WOMEN'S BUSINESS now!

In further dialogue she urges how much better women with their tact will conduct it.

Just as a woman, with nimble dexterity, thus with her hands disentangles a skein,
Hither and thither her spindles unravel it, drawing it out and pulling it plain;
So would this weary Hellenic entanglement soon be resolved by our womanly care,
So would our embassies neatly unravel it, drawing it here and pulling it there.

Lysistrata proceeds to put the women's case with great skill: but the Magistrate becomes more impatient than ever, until his girl tormenters dance round him once more, and throw over him this time a shroud, and drive him away, telling him he is keeping Charon waiting. The officers are similarly driven off with buckets of water, and the stage is vacant.

DOUBLE CHORUS

The *Chorus of Men* and *Chorus of Women* stand facing one another in the orchestra, and exchanging fierce defiance; *strophes* are answered by *antistrophes*, and each ends with a blow, or missile, by which words have been unexpectedly translated into action. For example, the first *strophe* of the men ends:

And I'll dress my sword in myrtle, and with firm and dauntless hand,
Here beside Aristogeiton (*creeping up to a statue in the orchestra*)
resolutely take my stand,
Marketing in arms beside him. This the time and this the place
When my patriot arm must deal a — BLOW upon that woman's face!

[*One of the chorus has darted out and suddenly struck one of the women.*]

There is a similar ending to the *antistrophe* of the women:

Murmuring are ye? Let me hear you, only let me hear you speak,
And from this unpolished slipper comes a — slap upon your cheek!

[*One of the women shies her slipper and hits the leader of the men's chorus.*]

So the second *strophe* of the men ends with the evolutions of the dance bringing them close up to the women, as the ode describes Amazons, and several of the men chorus unexpectedly seize several of the women chorus by the neck and give them a good shaking before they can get free. But in the *antistrophe* the women evolute nearer and nearer to the men, and, while the latter are watching against a repetition of their own manoeuvre, the leader of the women suddenly seizes the foot of the leader of the men, and upsets him against his unthinking companions, till the whole chorus are floundering on the floor together.

And you'll never stop from making these absurd decrees I know,
Till I catch your foot and toss you — Zeus-ha'-mercy, there you go!

EPISODE II

There is, however, inconstancy of purpose in the band of conspirators. This episode is a picture of Lysistrata's difficulties to keep her flock from escaping and secretly going home. Several are caught and make various

absurd excuses. At last Lysistrata confirms their spirits with a mysterious oracle. [The *Women's Chorus* have joined in this conversation: the *Chorus of Men* have been ignored.]

DOUBLE CHORUS

The two Choruses have not been facing one another so long without a mutual attraction making itself felt. Thus though they still exchange defiance, there are suggestions of relenting, such as an offer of a kiss made in a tone of threatening, and a threat of a blow by a speaker who shows she is not insensible to the admiration of the other sex.

EPISODE III

The husband of one of the women conspirators arrives, beseeching that he may have an interview with his wife, without whose companionship he cannot live. A farcical scene ensues, in which the wife carries out her part of tantalising her uxorious husband; perpetually coming to him and running back for something she has forgotten. She of course impresses upon him that she can only see him on condition that he enters into the league for peace; to which he vehemently assents. When at last she has actually come out, and he is throwing his arms round her, she again asks him about voting for peace. "I'll think about it," he says, believing he is now secure of her. But she disentangles herself from his grasp, and runs back, leaving him to exchange *lyric lamentations with the Chorus of Men*. [The *Chorus of Women* have been ignored in this scene.]

A *Herald* from Lacedæmonia meets the Magistrate, and informs him that Sparta has been similarly treated by its women, and proposes a conference for terms of peace. [In this purely mechanical scene neither Chorus has taken any part.]

DOUBLE CHORUS

The two Choruses continue to exchange (in *accelerated rhythm*) defiances, which show in each line signs of softening, till at last the men give way, with the reflection:

That was quite a true opinion which a wise man gave about you,
We can't live with such tormentors, no, by Zeus, nor yet without you!
They make peace: and (a most rare effect in Greek art) form a

JOINT CHORUS OF MEN AND WOMEN

The words of the Joint Ode express abandonment to general rejoicings. In particular they exhibit a kind of wit more popular in ancient than in modern literature — the *reverse-surprise*. Thus: all who want money are invited, on this day of joy, to come with purses, large and many of them, and borrow freely all they want, only promising that when the peace comes they will — *not* repay. Again: a feast is described as preparing, with various dainties being got ready, to which all are freely invited,

Come along, like men of mettle;
Come, as though 'twere all for you:
Come — you'll find my only entrance
Locked and bolted too.

EPISODE IV

Ambassadors arrive from Laconia (talking, of course, Doric Greek): they are met by representatives of Athens, and, in an elaborate scene, Lysistrata,

assisted by her beautiful maid *Reconciliation*, heals their differences, and brings them to agreement. *Exeunt* into the Acropolis to feast.

JOINT CHORUS

The preceding Joint Chorus is continued, with more reverse surprises.

CHORAL EXODUS

The Athenian banquetters come out of the Acropolis having great difficulty* in making the Chorus hear their knocks, the Men and Women being so taken up with one another that they neglect their office of keeping the gates. These Athenians describe, as they come out, the delights of the banquet, and how their former enemies the Lacedæmonians shone as feast companions. They are now *carrying torches* to escort their visitors. [The point of this appears to be to give the Athenians something to do in the scene, and so leave the Lacedæmonians to pair with the women inside the Acropolis.]

Amid this torchlight the Lacedæmonians pour out of the Acropolis and extemporise a Laconian Choral Ode on the stage, with full Doric ritual and language. Then Lysistrata bids them take as partners the Garrison of Women who now appear for the first time from the Acropolis: these descend into the orchestra, and face the Chorus already there. Thus was reached the unprecedented climax of a

QUADRUPLE, OR DOUBLE JOINT CHORUS

of (1) Athenian Men and Women and (2) Lacedæmonian Men with their women partners. Each performs an ode, in the manner of the two main rituals of Greece, Ionic and Doric. The Athenian is the dithyramb of wild self-abandonment.

Now for the Chorus, the Graces, the minstrelsy,
Call upon Artemis, queen of the glade;
Call on her brother, the lord of festivity,
Holy and gentle one, mighty to aid.
Call upon Bacchus, afire with his Mænades;
Call upon Zeus, in the lightning array'd;
Call on his queen, ever blessed, adorable;
Call on the holy infallible Witnesses,
Call them to witness the peace and the harmony,
This which divine Aphrodite has made.
Allala! Lallala! Lallala! Lallala!
Whoop for victory, Lallalalæ!
Evoi, Evoi, Lallala, Lallala!
Evæ, Evæ, Lallalalæ.

The Lacedæmonian ode maintains the measured self-restraint of the Doric mode. [The translator represents the Doric dialect by Scotch.] The substance is the same—the choral worship of the gods.

Sae we'se join our blithesome voices,
Praisin' Sparta, loud an' lang,
Sparta wha of auld rejoices
In the Choral dance an' sang.
O to watch her bonnie dochters

* This seems the most probable account of the scene; but the arrangement of the speakers in the original is very obscure. I have followed Bergk's text.

Sport along Eurota's waters!
Winsome feet for ever plyin',
Fleet as fillies, wild an' gay,
Winsome tresses, tossin', flyin',
As o' Bacchanals at play.

With such contrasted choral effects, prolonged amid the torchlight *ad libitum*, the play ends.

PLUTUS *

PERSONS REPRESENTED.—GOODMAN [Chremylus]: his wife, LITTLE CARIAN his slave, PUBLICPEST his friend—CHORUS OF COUNTRY PEOPLE, his neighbours—PLUTUS God of Wealth—POVERTY—MERCURY—A Just Man, An Informer, An Old Woman, A Young Man, A Priest of Jupiter.

The Scene represents the farm house of Goodman in the centre; on the distant side, the road to Delphi, on the other side the way to the neighbouring town.

PROLOGUE

Enter from the Delphian road Goodman and Little Carian, following a blind old man. The conversation between master and slave brings out that the master has been in pecuniary trouble, and gone to the oracle to enquire whether it would be well to bring up his son to the practice of the new fashion of cheating; the response bade him follow the first person he should meet on leaving the temple, and this proved to be the blind old man in front.—After some time they go up to him and force him to declare who he is: he admits himself to be the god Plutus in disguise.—Sensation. They enquire as to his squalid appearance: that is because he is just come from the house of the miser Patrocles, who has never washed himself since he was born.—His blindness? Jupiter blinded him, lest he should confine his favours to the good alone.—They offer to restore his sight if he will consent to remain with them; and they can assure him they are persons of excellent morals.—But Plutus trembles at the thought of Jupiter's anger. They rally him on his nervousness; "wealth is the timidest of all things." Does he not understand that all Jupiter's power is owing to himself?

Chrem. For you are carried on all arts that one can mention;
You set all men to work and stimulate invention.

Car. For you a man will sit the whole day cutting leather.

Chrem. One forges brass, another hammers boards together.

Car. In fashioning of gold one fellow is expert.

Chrem. One robs his neighbour's house, another steals his shirt.

Car. One is a fuller.

And another washes fells.

Chrem. This one tans hides for you.

Car. And that one onions sells.

Plut. And all this is for me?—to think I did not know it!

Car. If great men have long hair—'tis he who lets them grow it.

Chrem. And does not he supply the council hall with votes?

Car. Of course he does, and find the crews that man our boats.

Chrem. And does he not at Corinth keep the foreign troops?

Car. And is it not through him that Pamphilus still droops?

Chrem. To him the public owe Philepsius' descriptions.

Car. And are indebted for alliance with Egyptians.

Plut. And can I do so much, I, that am only one?

Chrem. The story of your power is barely yet begun:

Your power is infinite: a man may have too much
Of everything besides that's reckoned pleasant; such
As love.

* The verse quotations are from Mr. Rudd's translation.

Car. Bread.
Chrem. Music.
Car. Sweetmeats.
Chrem. Honour.
Car. Toasted cheese.
Chrem. Prize-winning.
Car. Figs.
Chrem. Ambition.
Car. Dough-nuts.
Chrem. Office.
Car. Peas.

Chrem. But man was never known to have too much of you!
Give him a round three thousand down,—what will he do?
Wish that it was but four! Well, give him that,—and then?
Forsooth he'd rather die than live with less than ten!

Plutus feels reassured and consents to dwell with them. *Goodman* takes him into his house, sending the slave to summon his neighbours to rejoice with him.

CHORUS-ENTRY

Concerto (in long iambs). *Little Carian* jokes the Chorus on their sluggish movements of old age, while they, not knowing any cause yet for rejoicing, cry out at his impudence.

Car. Men who have eaten many a time
leek porridge with my master,
Good neighbours and good workmen too,
pray move a little faster;
Indeed you must knock up the dust,
nor grudge a little labour.
So pray be quick, 'tis just the nick
to serve a worthy neighbour.

Chorus You blockhead, don't you see that we
make all the haste we can?
What more can be expected from
an old and broken man?
You think it fun to make me run
without the information
Why Chremylus has sent for us,
and what his expectation?

When the slave had kept up the quarrel long enough he lets out the secret, which makes a great difference to the briskness of the Chorus's movements.

Chorus Shall we be rich!
Car. Of course you will;
dismiss all idle fears;
You'll be as rich as Midases,
unless you lack the ears.
Chorus If that is true—Ri-too-ral-loo!
Away with melancholy:
Eh! dash my wig! I'll dance a jig:
I never felt so jolly!

Thus arrived at the farm-door they proceed to

A DANCE, leading to SCENE I

Goodman greets the Chorus. He has scarcely begun to talk when his friend Publicpest hurries in, showing how quickly the news has travelled "round the barbers' shops." But Publicpest will not for a moment entertain the idea that his friend has come honestly by the rumoured accession of wealth.

Pub. Have you really become as rich as they say?

Good. Well, I hope to be, if Heaven please;—there are risks—

Pub. Heaven please? Risks? This looks bad. Suddenly rich, and afraid, is suggestive of a man who has done something not quite right.

Good. How, not quite right?

Pub. If, for example, you should have stolen some gold or silver from the oracle, no doubt intending to repent?

Good. Apollo, averter of evil, not I, indeed!

Pub. Don't talk nonsense, my good Sir; I'm certain of it.

Good. You need not think anything of the kind.

Pub. What a thing it is that there is no good in anybody; all are slaves of gain!

Good. By Ceres, you've lost your senses.

Pub. (aside) What a fall from his former good name!

Good. I say you are mad, man!

Pub. (aside) His very glance has a strange wavering, that tells of a man that has made a villain of himself.

Good. I understand your croaking. You want to go shares.

Pub. Shares in what?

Good. Just so: but it isn't that, it's something else.

Pub. You mean you did not steal it, you—carried it off?

Good. You are an idiot.

Pub. You mean to say you have not even committed fraud?

Good. Certainly not!

Pub. Hercules! What am I to do? The man won't tell the truth.

Good. You accuse before you know.

Pub. My good friend, let me settle it for you; I'll do it at the smallest possible cost. I'll stop the orators' mouths before the town gets an inkling of it.

Good. You'll lay out three halfpence in a friendly way, and send in a bill for a shilling.

Pub. I fancy I see a certain person sitting at the bar, with suppliant staff in his hand and wife and children weeping round him, for all the world like Pamphilus' painting of the Children of Hercules.

Good. On the contrary, I have wherewith to bring it about that none but the good and wise shall be rich.

Pub. What do you say? have you stolen as much as that?

Good. Confound it! you'll be the death of me.

Pub. Nay, you will have none but yourself to thank for your death.

Good. No fear of that, seeing I hold possession of PLUTUS, you old beggar!

Pub. Plutus, says he! a pretty Plutus you've got!

Good. The god himself.—Pub. Where is he?—Good. Why, indoors.—

Pub. Where?—Good. At my house.—Pub. Your house?—

Good. Certainly.—Pub. The devil! Plutus at your house?—

Good. By heaven, it is as I say.—Pub. You are speaking the truth?—Good. Yes.—Pub. By Vesta?—Good. Yea, by Nep-

tune!—Pub. Neptune of the Ocean?—Good. And any other Neptune there may be.

Pub. Then are you not for sending your visitor round to your friends?

Good. That has yet to come.

Pub. To come?

Good. Yes. He has first to be restored to sight: at present he is blind.

Pub. Ah, I always wondered why he never found his way to me, all these years.

While they are engaged in this talk there suddenly bursts in upon them a hideous hag, looking like a Fury out of a tragedy. She begins to reproach them with doing a hasty and unholy deed in thinking to open the blind god's eyes: she has a right to speak for she is their old companion Poverty. After some preliminary exchange of abuse the scene settles down to the forensic contest (*in anapests*): Goodman and his friend putting the case for riches, and Poverty pleading for herself. The Chorus just speak for the purpose of inviting the disputants to begin. Goodman opens his case by urging that, his eyes once opened, Riches must reverse the inequalities of the world and bestow favours on the good.

Here is a rogue, who is rolling in riches
robbed from his fellows to feather his nest;
There are the honest, who never know fortune,
never from hunger nor scantiness free,
All through a life of toil unending,
desperate Poverty, stable with thee.

Poverty calls them dotards for not seeing that with the loss of such inequalities will be lost the motive of all enterprise.

Plutus will see, and divide himself equally;

Science and Art will fall unto decay.

Who will be smith? or shipwright? or shoemaker?

who will tan leather? or puddle in clay?

Who will look after the ploughing and reaping?

washing of linen? or setting a stitch?

Who is to care for laborious arts, when

all may be idle as all will be rich.

Chrem. Truce to your list! and the nonsense you're talking!

all that we want our slaves will supply.

Pov. Aye!—but who will supply you the article slaves?

Chrem. Slaves!—have we not money to buy?

Pov. Who is to sell them, when money's an article
not in demand?

Chrem. Some lucre-led hound,

Merchant in man-flesh from Thessaly coming;

where as we know man-stealers abound.

Pov. Softly! but, as you order the world, there

never will be a man-stealer at all:

Who that is rich will encounter the risks that

must to the share of the kidnapper fall?

Under such a régime, she continues, where will they get gifts for their mistresses, or the various luxuries of life?

Under my reign if you require a
thing of the kind, you have it with ease:
I, like a sharp tyrannical mistress,
ever sit by the artificer's side,

Threatening death, or making him work for a call from within that will not be denied.

Chrem. You to pretend to be our benefactress !
Truly you give us — blains on our toes,
Hungering children, withered old women,
fleas in numbers that nobody knows,
Armies of gnats to slaughter our sleep, ever
trumpeting, while they encircle one's head,
'Sleeper, awake ! you may waken to hunger,
nevertheless, you must get out of bed.'
Bed, did I say ? — 'tis a mattress of rushes, your
cover a moth-eaten matting of flags ;
Under your head you may have a great stone, and
wear for a coat a mere bundle of rags.
Add to these treasures the stalks of a mallow,
succulent food when one cannot get bread ;
Dishes of peas in their season — oh, no ! old
tops of the turnip will serve one instead.
Is it a stool, or a basin you wish for ?
Jars that are broken will serve you ; and then
What would you ask more ? — These are the treasures,
Poverty, you have presented to men.

Poverty retorts that they are confusing the poor man and the beggar.

Poor, not a beggar, he wants not and wastes not ; has
bread for his eating, and clothes for his back ;
All day cheerfully sticking to work he has
nothing superfluous, nothing to lack.

Chrem. Happy indeed, is the man you describe, and
blessed, by Ceres, the life he has led !
All through his days he has laboured and stinted, yet
leaves not enough to bury him, dead.

But which, she asks, has the fairer servants to look upon ?

His are the men with the 'fair round belly' the
fat on their ankles, and gout in the toes ;
Mine are the slender, the lithesome, and lively,
wasps in the waist, and wasps to their foes ;

Chrem. Elegant, terrible wasps if you please, all
carefully starved to the requisite shape.

Still stronger is the case for Poverty when the character of her servants is considered.

Pov. Everywhere look at the Friends of the People, the
favourite leaders of public opinion ;
While they are poor, how honest and just are their
views about popular rights and dominion :
Let them, however, but get into office,
let them get fat on the spoils of the town :
Straight they will turn into rogues, and will talk of the
duty of putting the Populace down.

Even *Goodman* has to admit this last argument. But, he makes rejoinder,
how is it that all men hate and fly Poverty ? — She answers that they hate
to be corrected : children fly their parents for the same reason. — But *Good-*

man takes refuge in the gods, who have all things, whereas they leave
penury to mortals. — *Poverty* meets him on his own ground.

Jupiter's poor. And that I will show you by
process of reasoning lucid and curt.
If he were rich, how could it have happened that
when he set up the Olympian cause,
Duly to which in quinquennial periods
Greeks from all quarters assemble in force,
He should have offered the winner no more than a
spray of wild olive to set on his hair ?
Nothing but gold would have met the occasion,
if, as you fancy, he had it to spare.

Chrem. Rather, it shows him as valuing gold, and
holding his own with remarkable thrift :
Nothing is lost from his store, while conquerors
go away proud with a trumpery gift.

Neither party convinces the other, and *Poverty* is driven off with taunts
and blows ; while *Goodman* takes blind *Plutus* off to the temple of *Aesculapius*,
and the chorus filled up the interval with

A DANCE — SCENE II

Little *Carian* returns and relates to the *Wife of Chremylus* (as in a
Messenger's Speech) the scene in the temple : how the various sick people
came, each bringing his bed, and lay down for the night within the Sacred
Building in order round the walls. Various comic incidents fill up the
story. How the priest came to the altar on which the offerings of dried
figs and cakes were placed, and reverently deposited these — in his pocket.
How he himself smelt out a pot of porridge which an old woman had beside
her bed, and he, emulous of the piety of the priest, reached his hand
towards the porridge —

Goodman's Wife. Daring man ! were you not afraid of the god ?

Little Carian. Yes, horribly, — lest he should get to the porridge
before me.

Just as he was reaching it the owner heard a noise and stretched out her
hand : he caught it in his teeth and hissed like *Aesculapius'* sacred
snake : the old woman in terror put her head under the bedclothes and he
swallowed the porridge. In the dead of night *Aesculapius*, with his two
daughters, *Health* and *Panacea*, went round and ministered to each sufferer.
They cured *Plutus* by whistling for two prodigious snakes, which licked his
eyeballs and he saw. — *Goodman's Wife* and the slave prepare to meet the
god on his return.

DANCE — SCENE III

The return of *Plutus* in triumph — already incommoded by crowds of dis-
interested people who must wish him joy. He offers formal thanksgiving,
and will know in future where to bestow his favors. He repels *Goodman's*
Wife in her attempt to deluge him with sweetmeats, in order (he says) to
avoid stage effects. [A hit at the poet himself as well as his rivals.]

DANCE — SCENE IV

A *Just Man* arrives to offer thanksgiving to *Plutus* at his deliverance
from life-long poverty, the result of helping ungrateful friends. He brings
his thread-bare cloak, and clouted shoes to dedicate them before the god.

Enter to him an Informer in distress that his trade no longer pays and he is being ruined. The usual badgering of this unpopular profession takes place. *Informer* tries to represent himself as a pillar of the state, whose sole object is to aid the established laws, and hinder wrong-doing.

Goodman. Has not the constitution appointed magistrates for this express purpose?

Informer. But who is to act as accuser?

Goodman. The constitution says, "Whoever pleases."

Informer. That's me. The burden of the constitution rests on my shoulders.

Goodman. Alas, poor constitution!

In the end the *Informer* is forced to change clothes with the *Just Man*, and then driven off.

DANCE—SCENE V

An *Old Woman* enters to complain of a youth, poor but wondrous fair, who but a little while ago loved her, and loaded her with caresses: but now for some reason has suddenly deserted her.

The *Young Man* enters, crowned with chaplets, and at the head of a band of torchlight revellers. He scoffs at his aged flame and her endearments, cruelly holding up the torch to her face to show the wrinkles. He suddenly, however, recovers his respect for age when he notices that Goodman is in years; and they go in together.

DANCE—SCENE VI

Enter Mercury. His occupation as usher to the gods is now fast going (since men now no longer look to heaven for prosperity). He proposes to take service with Plutus: and goes through the list of his divine offices. He will be their Turnkey.—But they never lock their doors.—Then their Chief Merchant.—But they have riches already, and do not need to drive bargains.—Then let them make him Trickster-General.—But they are going in for innocence.—At least he can be Marshal of the Way.—No: the god has got his eyes back, and can see to walk alone.—So he has at last to take service as Pudding-washer.

DANCE—EXODUS

The *Priest of Jupiter* himself comes at last: the temples are all deserted and his occupation gone. He enters the service of Plutus, and they form a farcical procession, the *Chorus* falling in at the rear, singing.

A SCENE FROM *THE FROGS*

The god Bacchus and his slave Xanthias have crossed the Styx, and arrived in the region of the Dead. Suddenly, a sound of flutes is heard, and they stand aside to make way for a

COMUS

Torchlight Procession of the Initiated

Chorus Come from thy holy seats,
Come from thy deep retreats,
Come, come, Iacchus.
Dancing along the mead,
Come, thine own troop to lead.
Come, come, Iacchus.
Let the fresh myrtle bough,
Studded with flowers,
Wave o'er thy crownèd brow.
Free mirth is ours.
So let thy foot advance,
Bold in the graceful dance.
This holy company,
Gathered for revelry,
Wistfully waits for thee:
Come, come, Iacchus.

Xan. Much-honored Porserpine, this smell of pork is nice!
Bacc. Pray you be still, and you may chance to get a slice.

Chorus Kindle the flaming brands,
Uplift them in thy hands,
Light! light! Iacchus.
All the field shines afar;
Thou art our Evening Star,
Bright, bright Iacchus.
Elders, by thee inspired,
Cast away pain,
Cast away years, and fired
Dance in thy train.
Be thy bright torch on high
Polestar to every eye;
While o'er the dewy lea,
Dancing in company,
Fleetly we follow thee,
Blessed Iacchus.

Anapaestic Interlogue

A reverent silence fits this place;
and from our Chorus let him depart
Who is yet untaught in the Mysteries;
who has stain of guile on his heart;

Who has not won from the Muses' secrets
 freedom of thought, and bodily grace ;
 Who has not learned from Cratinus the bull-fed
 what is befitting the time and the place ;
 Who takes pleasure in scurrilous jesting,
 not regarding the 'whom' and the 'when' ;
 Who stays not a strife in the city, but
 is a churl towards his own townsmen ;
 Who, for his private object, fans their
 factious fury and mutual hate ;
 Who, for a gift or favour, ministers
 wrong for right as their magistrate ;
 Sells his ship or deserts his post, or,
 under colour of trafficking, sends,
 Like a Thorycio, thongs, or hemp, or
 pitch to serve the enemies' ends ;
 He who at the feast of Bacchus,
 having been smartly lashed in a play,
 Goes to the Courts, and bringing his action,
 nibbles a hole in the poet's pay :
 These, one and all, I forewarn, I forbid, I pro-
 hibit from hearing our mystical song !
 And summon all others to lend us their voices,
 and keep this feast the merry night long.

Semichorus Where the turf invites our feet,
 Where the flowers are rank and sweet,
 Brave hearts, advance, advance !
 Stirring foot and merry lip,
 Flinging wanton jest and quip,
 Befit the Mystics' dance.

Semichorus Nay, enough of frolic wit ;
 Wear the palm who wins in it.
 Praise ye the Holy Maid ;
 Lady, Saviour, unto thee,
 Rise our strains ; for thou wilt be
 Our never-failing aid.

Chorus And now with holy hymns adorn
 Queen Ceres of the golden corn.

Semichorus Ceres, let thine eye be o'er us,
 Lady of the Mysteries !
 Look benignly on thy Chorus ;
 Shield us from our enemies.
 So in mirth and dance and song
 We may while the whole day long.

Semichorus Much, to please the laughter-loving,
 Much to please the wiser head,
 May I speak : that, all approving,
 Everywhere it may be said,
 Worthily our part was done,
 Worthily the garland won.

Chorus Invoke ye now the lusty god
 Who oft with us the dance has trod.

Semichorus Come, master of the sweetest strain,
 Iacchus come, to guide our train
 Forth to the Goddess' dwelling ;
 And show how, toil dispelling,
 Thy guidance in our festal sport
 Beguiles the way, and makes it short.

Come, lover of the dance and song,
 Iacchus come : to thee belong
 The skirt in frolic tatters,
 And sandal rent. What matters ?
 Protected by thy festal sway,
 Unchided we may dance and play.

Come, lover of the song and dance,
 Iacchus come : looking askance,
 I saw two eyes that twinkled,
 A cheek with laughter wrinkled,
 For she looked merrily at me.
 Iacchus, join our company.

Xan. Where is that lass ? for I am much disposed to try
 To break a jest and dance with her.

Bacc. And so am I.

Iambic Interlogue

Chorus * Now shall we, fellow-mockers,
 Make game of Archedemus ?
 Who at the election brought forth nought but blackballs :
 But now has a large following
 In the tomb's upper circles,
 And sets the fashion in hell's rascalry.
 And Kleisthenes, it's rumored,
 Amid the musty tombstones,
 Tears his fair hair, and wounds his dainty cheek,
 Upon the bare earth flings him,
 To whine and wail and weep for
 Sebinus, late of Rogue-and-Rascal street.
 And Kallias, they tell me,
 The son of Lady Slattern,
 Fought at the sea-fight bravely clad in — wench-skin.

Bacc. Good people can you tell me where does Pluto dwell ?
 For we are just arrived, and never here before.

Chorus Ye need no further go, nor ask again ; for know
 That happily ye stand before the very door.

Bacc. You sir, pick up the pack.

* This and the following fourteen lines are not by Mr. Rudd.

Xan. *Idea are to lack;
It is the very thing he said no great while back.*

Semichorus Ye who have the holy sign,
Ye who share the feast divine,
Through the flowery grove advance,
Form the circle, lead the dance,
I must to the deeper shade,
Where holy women, wife and maid,
Worshipping shall spend the night;
For them I must lift the light.

Semichorus To our meadows, sprent with flowers,
With our measured step and sound,
Gracefully tread ye the ground;
Ever as the blessed hours
Bring the festal season round,
Onward to our rosy bowers.
Unto us, and us alone,
Who, at the divine behest,
Duteously have shared our best
In service to our own
And to the stranger coming guest,
Is this cheerful sun-light shown.

[*Chorus retire to right and left of Orchestra.*]

TRINUMMUS: OR TWO-POUND-TEN

PERSONS.—LUXURY and POVERTY, Allegorical Figures.—CHARMIDES, an Athenian Merchant—his son LESBONICUS (who has a slave STASIMUS)—his friend CALLICLES (who has another friend MEGARONIDES).—PHILTO, another old Gentleman of Athens—his son LYSITELES.—A Professional Sharper.

Scene: Athens, the street in which is Charmides' house.

PROLOGUE

Luxury appears conducting her daughter *Poverty* to the house of *Charmides*. She explains to the audience:
There is a certain youth dwells in this house,
Who by my aid has squander'd his estate.
Since then for my support there's nothing left,
My daughter I'm here giving him to live with.

I

Megaronides appears on his way to call on his friend *Callicles*, soliloquising on the painful duty he feels of reproaching him with declension from his old uprightness. *Enter Callicles* and they exchange greetings.

Meg. Save you, *Callicles*:
How do you do? How have you done?

Cal. So, so.

Meg. Your wife, how fares she?

Cal. Better than I wish.

Meg. Troth I am glad to hear she's pure and hearty.

Cal. You're glad to hear what sorrows me.

Meg. I wish the same to all my friends as to myself.

Cal. But hearkye—how is your good dame?

Meg. Immortal; lives, and is like to live.

Cal. A happy hearing!

Pray heav'n, that she may last to outlive you!

Meg. If she were yours, faith I should wish the same.

Cal. Say, shall we make a swop? I take your wife,

You mine? I warrant you, you would not get

The better in the bargain.

Meg. Nor would you

Surprise me unawares.

Cal. Nay, but in troth

You would not even know what you're about.

Meg. Keep what you've got. The evil that we know

Is best. To venture on an untried ill,

Would puzzle all my knowledge how to act.

Well—give me a good life, and that's a long one.

But mind me now, all joking set apart,

I came to you on purpose.

Then Megaronides begins to talk severely about the change in his friend's character.

Cal. How came it in your mind to hold this language?
Meg. For that it doth behove all honest men
 To keep them both from blame and from suspicion.
Cal. Both cannot be.
Meg. For why?
Cal. Is that a question?

Myself of my own bosom keep the key,
 To shut out misdemeanour; but suspicion
 Is harbour'd in another's. Thus, if I
 Suspect you to have stol'n the crown of Jove,
 From where he stands in the high Capitol,
 What though you have not done it, I am free
 However to suspect you, nor can you
 Prevent me.

Conjured by Callicles as his closest friend to tell him what he finds wrong in him, Megaronides details the opinions the town is beginning to have of him, how he is nicknamed Gripe-all, Vulture, and the like, and especially how people talk about his behaviour to his absent friend Charmides. This Charmides is understood to have committed the general welfare of his family and affairs to Callicles, his own son being a fast youth, not to be trusted with money; now, instead of seeking to restrain the young man, people say Callicles is abetting his extravagances, and has actually, when the scapegrace sought to raise money by selling his own father's house, aided his plans by himself becoming the buyer. To the astonishment of Megaronides Callicles admits that this rumour is perfectly true; he then, with great caution and secrecy lets out the whole story—how that Charmides, on leaving Athens, committed to him a family secret, viz., that a huge treasure was buried in the house, of which the father dared not let his son have any knowledge lest in his absence he should appropriate it. Now Callicles learned all of a sudden that Lesbonicus was going to sell the house: alarmed lest the treasure should pass out of their hands altogether he saw no better device than for himself to purchase the house, and keep it in trust for the father's return, or for the daughter's marriage portion. Megaronides is confounded at the mistake he has made, and, when the two friends have amicably parted, inveighs against the gossips which had led him astray.

Ev'ry thing
 They will pretend to know, yet nothing know.
 They'll dive into your breast, and learn good thoughts
 Present and future: nay, they can discover
 What the king whisper'd in her highness's ear,
 And tell what passed in Juno's chat with Jove.

II

Enter *Lysiteles* soliloquising [*in highly intricate and changeable metres*] on life generally; he is perplexed with his inability to choose between a life of pleasure and a life of thrift.

Unnumbered the cares that my heart is revolving,
 Unmeasured the trouble I bear while I ponder;
 Myself with myself is afflicted and wasted,
 My thoughts are a master that cruelly drives me:

Yet still comes no answer, no end to my query—
 To which life of two shall my years be devoted,
 To love, or to business.

He will bring the parties face to face: and first he speaks for love.

Love has none but willing subjects: in his nets none other snares
 But the loving: these he aims at, these pursues, their substance wastes.

Smooth-spoken, sharp finger'd, a liar, a sweet-tooth,
 A robber, a bane to the life of seclusion,

A hunter of secrets.

Let a lover once be stricken with the kiss of her he loves,
 In a trice all he has creeps away, melts away.

'Give me this, honey dear, by our love, do not fail':—

And the goose must reply, 'Heart of mine, be it so:

Also that, also more, what you wish shall be given.'

Thus a victim bound she strikes:

Begs for more unsatisfied.

With the thought of this waste of money, and the bitter jealousies that vary the sweets of a life of pleasure, the case goes against love.

Begone, love, the word of divorcement is spoken;

Love, to me never more be a lover.

It is fix'd, I am all for what profits.

Enter *Philo*, his father, and the moralising continues [*the metre gradually settling down to accelerated rhythm or trochaics*]. The father has a general disgust at the thought of modern degeneracy:

Upsetting all the good old ways, an evil, grasping, greedy crew,

They hold the sacred as profane; public or private, all is one.

The son claims to have lived according to his father's good precepts: the father checks this self-satisfaction:

Cover o'er good deeds with good deeds, tile-like, till no rain comes
 through:

Only he is good, whose goodness ever keeps him penitent.

For this very reason, the son replies, he wishes to ask his father's assistance in doing a kindness to a friend in trouble. The moralising *Philo* seizes the opportunity for a fresh lecture against so helping the bad as to feed their distemper. *Lysiteles* urges that they are rich enough and to spare.

Phil. From however much however little take: is't more or less?

When *Philo* hears that the friend is the spendthrift Lesbonicus, he again becomes severe, and will not listen to the plea that Lesbonicus has been unfortunate:

For, by heaven, the wise man's fortune only by himself is shaped.

Lysiteles urges that time is required to mature such prudence.

Phil. Length of years is but the relish; wisdom is the food of life.

At last *Lysiteles* is allowed to explain that he wishes, not to give his friend anything, but to receive from him his sister in marriage without dowry. After a decent show of protest the father consents, and will himself make the proposal.

He suddenly sees Lesbonicus and his slave Stasimus coming up the street: and stands aside to hear what they are talking about. The master is angry that all his money is gone again, and demands what has been done with it?

Stas. Eaten and drunk, and washed away in baths;

Cooks, butchers, poulterers, fishmongers, confectioners,

Perfumers, have devoured it;—gone as soon
As a grain of corn thrown to an ant.

Lesbonicus is hard to convince, and Stasimus has to repeat the sad story.

Stas. You cannot eat your cake and have it too;—
Unless you think your money is immortal.
The fool too late, his substance eaten up,
Reckons the cost.

Les. Th' account is not apparent.

Stas. Th' account's apparent, but the money's gone.

Philto discovers himself, and, after general courtesies, makes his proposal.
Lesbonicus treats it as a mockery, though the slave jumps at the idea.

Phil. You tell me now,
We are not on a footing; that your means
Don't equal ours.

Les. I say so.

Phil. What of that?—

If you were present at a public feast,
And haply some great man was plac'd beside you,
Of the choice cates serv'd up in heaps before him
Would you not taste, but at the table rather
Sit dinnerless, because he neighbour'd you?

Les. Sure I should eat, if he forbade me not.

Stas. And I, ev'n if he did;—so cram myself,
I'd stuff out both my cheeks: I'd seize upon
The daintiest bits before him, nor give way to him
In matters that concern'd my very being.
At table no one should be shy or mannerly,
Where all things are at stake, divine and human.

Phil. Faith, what you say is right.

Stas. I'll tell you fairly.

Your great man, if I meet, I make way for him,
Give him the wall, show him respect, but where
The belly is concern'd, I will not yield
An inch,—unless he box me into breeding.

Phil. The match that I propose for your consent,
Why will you not agree to?—What are riches?—
The gods alone are rich: to them alone
Is wealth and pow'r: but we poor mortal men,
When that the soul, which is the salt of life
Keeping our bodies from corruption, leaves us,
At Acheron shall be counted all alike,
The beggar and the wealthiest.

Lesbonicus is moved by this persistent kindness, and at last bethinks him
of a little farm he has, the only bit of his ancestral estate left to him: he
insists upon giving this as his sister's dowry.

Stas. Dear master, would you part then with our nurse,
That feeds us? our support? think what you're doing.
How shall we eat in future?

Les. Hold your tongue.

Am I accountable to you?

Stas. (aside) We're ruined
Past all redemption, if I don't invent
Some flam.—I have it. *Philto* a word with you.

Phil. What would you?

Stas. Step aside this way a little.

Phil. I will. (*They retire.*)

Stas. The secret I shall now unfold

Let not my master know, nor any other.

Phil. Me you may safely trust.

Stas. By gods and men

I do conjure you, let not this same farm

Come into your possession, or your son's.

The reason will I tell.

Phil. I fain would hear it.

Stas. First then, whene'er the land is plough'd, the oxen

Ev'ry fifth furrow drop down dead.

Phil. Fie on it!

Stas. A passage down to Acheron's in our field.

The grapes grow mouldy as they hang, before

They can be gather'd.

Les. He is, I suppose,

Persuading him: though he's an arrant rogue,

To me he's not unfaithful.

Seas. Hear what follows.

When that the harvest promises most fair,

They gather in thrice less than what was sown.

Phil. Nay!—then methinks it were a proper place

For men to sow their wild oats where they would not

Spring up.

Stas. There never was a person yet,

That ever own'd this farm, but his affairs

Did turn to bad:—some ran away, some died,

Some hang'd themselves. Why, there's my master now,

To what sad straits is he reduc'd!

Phil. O keep me

Far from this farm.

Stas. You'd have more cause to say so,

Were you to hear the whole. There's not a tree

But has been blasted with the lightning; more—

The hogs are eat up with the mange; the sheep

Pine with the rot, all scabby as this hand:

And no man can live there six months together.

Phil. This farm is a fit spot, as you've described it,

Wherein to place bad men, and, as they tell us

That in those islands still 'The Fortunate'

Assemble the upright and the virtuous livers,

So should the wicked here be thrust together,

Since 'tis of such a nature.

Stas. 'Tis th' abode

Of misery. But without more words,—whatever

Evil you'd search for, you might find it here.

Phil. You may go seek it there, or where you will.

Stas. Be cautious how you tell what I have told you.

Phil. You've told it to no babblers.

Stas. Now my master

Would gladly part with it, could he but find

A gudgeon to his purpose.

Phil.

I'll have none of it.

Stas. If you are wise, indeed you will not have it.

Philto has been as ready to be deceived as Stasimus to deceive him: and the old man now retires, after making the betrothal a formal agreement, and adding that this business of the farm *Lysiteles* must settle with his son. *Stasimus* is sent with the news to the young lady.

III

Stasimus meeting *Callicles* gives him the news of the betrothal: *Callicles* goes off wondering how the girl can have made so good a match without a dowry.—Then the slave sees the two young men disputing warmly, evidently about this vexed question of the dowry, in which *Stasimus* feels so keen a personal interest that he stands aside and listens. The dispute is long and warm, bringing out the contrast of character between the two friends. *Lesbonicus* is presented as a spendthrift who is notwithstanding stubborn in his notions of family honour, though the assertion of it is at the cost of his own ruin.

Let me not by loss of honour seek relief from loss of wealth.

Lysiteles sees clearly what the other means. He will insist on giving up this the last bit of property left him, the only hope for recovering his losses: and then, as soon as the marriage is over, he will fly from his native land, a needy adventurer in the wars!—At this *Stasimus* can no longer restrain himself, and cries out, "Bravo!"

Lesb. What brings here your meddling chatter?

Stas. What—shall take it back again.

Stasimus retires, and listens as *Lysiteles* makes a final condition of the marriage that there shall be no dowry. *Stasimus* despairs: they will have to turn soldiers.

Enter *Megaronides* and *Callicles* in consultation on the new turn given to the whole affair by this matter of the betrothal. *Callicles* cannot let his friend's daughter be married like a pauper: he could easily get money enough for the dowry out of the buried treasure, but under what pretext can he give it to the girl, without exciting suspicion? At last *Megaronides* hits upon a brilliant idea. Let them get one of the professional sharpers, that are ready to be hired for any purpose of conspiracy; and let him, for a consideration, pretend that he has come from *Charmides* abroad, bringing money to *Callicles* with which to dower his daughter, should she marry. Difficulties of detail, such as forging the letter, and accounting for the absence of the signet-ring which would naturally accompany it, they rapidly arrange, and *exceunt* to carry out the scheme.

IV

Enter *Charmides* just landed from his voyage, and giving thanks to the gods for his safe journey.

And to thee before all others, Neptune, is my spirit grateful,
For, while men have called thee cruel, stern of mood, unsatiated,
Measureless in might and foulness, I thy kindly aid have tasted.
Merciful and calm I found thee, all that heart could wish of ocean.
Faithful thou whom men call faithless. Surely, but for thy protection,
Foully had thy underworkers torn in pieces, widely scattering,
Wretched me and my belongings, broadcast o'er the sky-blue meadows:

Lo, like hungry hounds the whirlwinds round about the ship were circling,
Floods above us, waves beneath us, howling gales on mainmast swooping,
Toppling yards and canvas splitting: then a gracious calm was sent us.

His meditations are interrupted by the approach of the hired *Sharper*, who is peering up and down the street, dressed in a queer imitation of foreign costume.

Sharper I'll name this day the Feast of Two-Pound-Ten,
On which I've let my art out for that sum.
Here am I, from *Seleucia* just arrived,
Arabia, Asia, Macedon,—which I never
Saw with my eyes, nor ever once set foot on.
Behold, what troubles will not poverty
Bring on a needy wretch! For those gold pieces
Am I compelled to say that I receiv'd
These letters from a man, of whom I'm ignorant
Who he may be; nor do I know, indeed,
If such an one was ever born.

Charmides does not like the man's face, especially as he is looking hard at his own house door. He goes up to him, and finds on inquiry that he is seeking his own son *Lesbonicus*.

Charm. Why do you want to find them out? Who are you?
Whence are you? where d'you come from?

Sharper Hey! You ask
So many questions in a breath, I know not
Which to resolve you first: but if you'll put them
Gently and singly, one by one, my name
I'll tell, and wherefore I have journey'd hither.

Charm. Well,—as you please. Come,—tell me first your name.

Sharper You ask an arduous task.

Charm. Why so?

Sharper Because,
Should you set out before the day began
With the first part and foremost of my name,
The night would go to bed ere you had reach'd
The hindmost of it.

Charm. He had need of torches
And of provisions, whoso undertakes
To journey through it.

Sharper I've another name though;
A tiny one,—no bigger than a hogshead.

Charm. This is a rogue in grain! But harkye—

Sharper What?

Charm. What want you with those persons you enquired for?

Sharper The father of the young man, *Lesbonicus*,
Gave me these letters. He's my friend.

Charm. (aside) I have him,—
He's taken in the manner. He pretends
Myself did give him letters,—I will have
Rare fun with him.

Sharper Attend, and I'll proceed.

Charm. I am attentive.

Sharper He commissioned me
To give one letter to young *Lesbonicus*,
His son, the other to his friend, to *Callicles*.

Charm. (*aside*) A pretty joke, i'faith! I'll keep it up.
Where was he?
Sharper He has managed matters well.
Charm. Where?
Sharper In Seleucia.
Charm. You had letters of him?
Sharper With his own hands he gave them into mine.
Charm. What sort of man?
Sharper He's taller than yourself
By half a foot.
Charm. (*aside*) Faith, he has gravell'd me,
To find that I was taller when away
Than now I'm here. You knew him, did you not?
Sharper Knew him? A foolish question! We were us'd
To mess together.
Charm. Say then, what name bore he?
Sharper A fair one verily.
Charm. I'd hear his name.
Sharper (*hesitating*) It's—it's—ah me!—his name is—
Charm. What's the matter?
Sharper I've swallowed it this instant unawares.
Charm. How? swallowed, say you? troth, I like him not,
Who holds his friends inclos'd within his teeth.
Sharper I had it at my tongue's end but just now.
Charm. (*aside*) 'Twas opportune my coming here to-day
Before this rascal.
Sharper (*aside*) I'm caught most plainly.
Charm. Have you yet found the name?
Sharper 'Fore gods and men
I own myself abash'd.
Charm. Behold how much
You knew him!
Sharper As myself. It happens oft
That what we hold in hand, and have in sight,
We look for as if lost. I'll recollect it
Letter by letter. It begins with C.
Charm. Is it Callicias?
Sharper No.
Charm. Calippus?
Sharper No.
Charm. Is't Callidemides?
Sharper No.
Charm. Callinicus?
Sharper No.
Charm. Is't Callimarchus?
Sharper 'Tis in vain to seek it,
Nor do I heed it much, so my own name
I don't forget.
Charm. But there are many here
Call'd Lesbonicus; and, unless you tell
The father's name, I cannot shew them to you
Whom you enquire for. What is't like? We'll try
If we can hit upon it by conjecture.
Sharper 'Tis like Char.
Charm. Is it Chares? Charidemus?
Or Charmides?

Sharper Oh, that. The gods confound him!
Charm. 'Tis fitter you should bless a friend than curse him.
Sharper A worthless fellow to have lain perdue thus
Within my lips and teeth.
Charm. You should not speak
Ill of an absent friend.
Sharper Why did the knave
Then hide him from me?
Charm. He had answer'd had you
But call'd him by his name. Where is he now?
Sharper Truly I left him last at Rhadamanth
In the Cecropian Island.
Charm. (*aside*) Can there be
A greater simpleton than I, to ask
Where I myself am? But no matter. Tell me—
Sharper What?
Charm. Let me ask, what places have you been at?
Sharper Most wondrous ones.
Charm. I should be glad to hear,
If 'tis not too much trouble.
Sharper I'm impatient
To give you an account. Then first of all,
We came to Araby in Pontus.
Charm. How?
Is Araby in Pontus?
Sharper Yes, it is;
But not that Araby, where frankincense
Is grown, but where sweet-marjoram, and wormwood.
Charm. (*aside*) 'Tis the completest knave! More fool am I though,
To ask him whence I came (which I must know,
He cannot), but that I've a mind to try,
How he'll get off at last.—What is your name,
Young man?
Sharper 'Tis Touchit; that, Sir, is my name,
A common one.
Charm. A very knavish name.
As though you meant to say, if anything
Was trusted to you, touch it, and 'tis gone.
But harkye,—whither did you further travel?

Marvellous travels of the Munchausen order are narrated until *Charmides*
has had enough, and begins to come to the point.
Charm. Hoa, Touchit,
Three words with you.
Sharper Three hundred, if you please.
Charm. Have you the money you received of Charmides?
Sharper In Phillippeans, told upon the nail,
A thousand pieces.
Charm. You received them, did you,
Of Charmides himself?
Sharper It had been wondrous
Had I receiv'd them of his grandsire, truly,
Or his great-grandsire, who are dead.
Charm. Young man,
Prithee give me the gold.

Sharper Give you what gold?
Charm. That which you own'd you did receive of me.
Sharper Received of you?
Charm. I say it.
Sharper Who are you?
Charm. Who gave to you the thousand pieces:—I Am Charmides.
Sharper You're not, nor ever shall be, I mean, the master of this gold. Away, You are a knowing one!—you'd take me in! But I too am a knowing one.
Charm. I'm Charmides.
Sharper You may be, but in vain. I bring no money. You've crept upon me in the very nick Most slyly. When I said I had brought gold, You then were Charmides; before you were not, Till I made mention of the gold. 'Twont do. So prithee, as you've taken up the name Of Charmides, e'en lay it down again.
Charm. Who am I, if I am not that I am?
Sharper What's that, to me? Be whom you please, you're welcome, So you are not the person I'd not have you. Before, you were not who you were; and now, You are who then you were not.
Charm. Come, dispatch.
Sharper How? What dispatch?
Charm. Give me the money.
Sharper Sure
 You dream, old gentleman.
Charm. Did you not own,
 That Charmides had giv'n it you?
Sharper I did,—
 In writing,—not in specie.
Charm. Prithee hence,
 And leave the place this instant, e'er I order you A hearty drubbing.
Sharper Why?
Charm. Because myself
 Am that same Charmides that you've invented;
 Who you pretend has giv'n you letters.
Sharper How!
 I pray you, are you he?
Charm. Yes, I am he.
Sharper What say you? are you he?
Charm. I am, I say.
Sharper Himself?
Charm. I say, I'm Charmides,—himself.
Sharper And are you he himself?
Charm. His very self.—
 Out of my sight; begone, then.
Sharper Now, because
 Your coming was so late, I'll have you beaten
 At the new Ædiles' and my own award.
Charm. What! you abuse me?

Sharper All the gods confound you
 For your arrival! I had little cared,
 If you had perish'd first. I've got at least
 The money for my trouble. Ill betide you!
 And now, or who you are, or who you are not,
 I value not a straw. To him I'll go,
 Who hir'd me for those pieces, and acquaint him,
 How that his money's thrown away. I'm gone.
 Farewell? Fare ill! May all the gods confound you,
 For coming from abroad, you Master Charmides!

When at last he is alone, *Charmides* wonders what the meaning of all this business can be: the bell does not clink without being handled.

He happens to see *Stasimus* running along the street, talking to himself, and stands aside to listen. *Stasimus* is heard to speak of having lost a ring at the tipping-house: he alternately runs on and stops, hesitating whether to go back in the hopeless chance of getting his ring again.

There was Theruchus,
 Cerconicus, Crinnus, Cercobulus, Collabus,
 A race of broken-shin'd and black-eyed bruisers,
 Knights of the chain, and squires o'th' whipping-post,
 And canst thou hope then, from among such fellows
 To get thy ring, when one of them did steal
 A racer's shoe off in his utmost speed?
Charm. 'Fore heav'n, a finish'd thief!
Stas. What's best to do?
 Shall I, in seeking what is gone forever,
 Add loss of labour too? What's gone, is gone.
 Then tack about, and hie thee to thy master.

Stopping at last near where Charmides is standing unseen, he vents his vexation in a long tirade against the decay of public morals; instead of the good old thrift, vice is now the road to honour.

What you lend is lost;
 And when you ask it of your friend again,
 You by your kindness make that friend your enemy.
 Still would you press him further, of two things
 You have the choice, either to lose your loan,
 Or lose your friend.

At this point *Charmides* recognizes in the speaker his own slave, and when at last *Stasimus* is going, shouts to him to stop. For a time the slave does not know who is calling him, and is saucy. At last Charmides declares himself.

Charm. Turn your head,
 And look upon me: I am Charmides.
Stas. Ha! who makes mention of that best of mortals?
Charm. That best of mortals, he himself, 'tis I.
Stas. (turning) O sea! O earth! O heav'n! O all ye gods!
 Have I my eyesight clear? and is it he?
 Or is it not? 'Tis he! 'tis he, for certain!
 'Tis he indeed! O my most wish'd-for master,
 Save you—
Charm. And you, too, Stasimus.

Stas.

That you're safe—

Charm. (interrupting) I know what you would say, and do believe you.

Explanations follow as to Charmides' family and the position of his affairs; and Stasimus insinuates his unfavourable view of Callicles' personal motives in his discharge of the trust committed to him. The entrance of *Callicles* at this point soon clears up this misunderstanding, though Stasimus maintains his unfavourable opinion to the last.

V

The last Act is filled up by the meeting between Charmides and all the various personages of the story, together with the clearing up of all that is obscure. The merchant confirms the betrothal of his daughter to Lysiteles, and provides an ample dowry for her, notwithstanding the lover's protest; if he likes the maiden, he must like the portion too.

Lesbonicus has to bear only gentle reproaches from his father, and *Callicles* promises him his daughter in marriage if he will turn over a new leaf. *Lesbonicus* declares he will take her, and, he adds, anyone else his father wishes.

Charm.

Angry though I be with you,

One man, one woe, is the quota.

Callicles.

Nay, too little in this case:

Since for such a hardened sinner twenty wives were not too much. *Lesbonicus* promises amendment, and all ends happily.

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THE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION
THE LECTURE-STUDY DEPARTMENT

No. 39, Part I.

ANCIENT COMEDY FOR ENGLISH AUDIENCES,

SYLLABUS OF A COURSE OF SIX LECTURE-STUDIES

BY RICHARD G. MOULTON, A.M. (CANTAB.), PH.D. (PENN.)
PROFESSOR OF LITERATURE (IN ENGLISH)

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EXERCISES

Topics for exercises are given at the end of the outline of each lecture. Answers in writing, to not more than two questions each week, are invited from all persons attending the lecture. These should be written on one side of the paper only, a broad margin being reserved on the left. The name of the centre, with some signature of the writer, should stand at the top of the first page. The exercises should be sent to Richard G. Moulton, A. M. Ph. D., The University of Chicago, Chicago, so as to arrive at least two days before the following lecture. They will be returned at the REVIEW, the following week, with such marginal and oral comments as they seem to require. If application is made to the lecturer, there will be an EXAMINATION at the end of the course for students who are qualified and desire to take it.

Any of the books referred to in these lectures may be obtained at special rates from THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, Chicago, Ill. Prices will be quoted on application.

UNIVERSITY CREDIT FOR LECTURE-STUDY COURSES

Readings in connection with each lecture are designated in the syllabus. The syllabus is provided with a perforated leaf upon which each student doing the full amount of assigned reading, or in addition to the reading, rendering to the lecturer the full number of written papers, is invited to record that fact. This leaf may be sent by the student to the lecturer who will certify to it by his signature, and will add such comments as he thinks appropriate. The leaf will then be returned by the lecturer to the student.

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In the case of advanced subjects, the examinations for entrance to the University shall have been passed, and also such examinations in preliminary subjects as may be required for the subject offered. Students presenting themselves for these examinations must attain the grades required in all the regular examinations of the University.

ANCIENT COMEDY FOR ENGLISH AUDIENCES

This is a course of recitals and lectures intended to introduce popular audiences to the general character of Ancient Classical Comedy, and its influence on the Romantic Drama of Shakespeare's age.

1. *The Clouds*: A Burlesque on Socrates and the New Education.
2. The Origin of Greek Comedy.
3. *The Birds*: A Burlesque on Speculative Enterprise.
4. Evolution of Greek into Roman Comedy.
5. *The Trinummus*: or Two-Pound-Ten.
6. Evolution of Ancient into Modern Drama.

Reading

The accompanying *Book of Illustrations* is all the reading recommended for the course, though other books may be mentioned from time to time.

ORIGIN OF COMEDY IN ANCIENT GREECE

1. In ultimate origin Comedy, like Tragedy, traces back to a combination between two offshoots of the Ballad Dance :

The Comus, or Wandering Dance, used in the festival worship of Dionysus [compare the phallic procession].

Satire [compare the modern Lampoon], a form which rapidly threw off the influence of music and gesture, and developed the 'iambic' metre, which approaches prose.

The amalgamation appears as 'Lyrical Comedy,' or 'Iambic Dance.' From one of the two constituent elements came satiric purpose; from the comus (as in Tragedy) came the creative force which makes dramatisation. Thus Comedy when fully developed could serve as the newspaper of antiquity, combining the functions of the Satiric Review, and the Comic Paper which satirises by cartoons.

[A transition stage in this evolution survives in a scene of the *Frogs*, in which a comus-procession halts at intervals to exchange bouts of satire with passers-by.]

2. Greek society was compounded of two strata: Aristocratic (Doric influence) and Democratic (Ionic influence). Comedy in its early history is seen fluctuating under these two influences :

Where Aristocratic influence prevails, it is limited to general satire or class-caricature—especially, Sicilian Comedy, with its use of mythology for satiric purpose [the gods are men writ large].

Where Democratic influence prevails, there is free handling of personalities and political questions.

3. The golden age of Grecian history, the leadership of democratic Athens after the Persian Wars [about 450-400 B. C.] suddenly raises Comedy into world literature.

OLD ATTIC COMEDY

This is the name given to the first species of comedy which secured a place in permanent literature—under the influence of Athenian democratic spirit—and by the individual genius of Aristophanes.

1. Matter and Spirit. Unlimited license—as regards decency, current politics, personalities, sacred topics.

[Of the eleven plays of Aristophanes four are manifestos of the peace party: *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Peace*, *Lysistrata*—five deal with social and religious topics: *Clouds* (rationalism), *Wasps* (the forensic craze), *Birds* (speculations), *Women in Parliament* and *Plutus* (socialist theories)—two are satires on the poet laureate of the popular party: *Mysteries*, *Frogs*.]

2. Form: Natural development disturbed by imitation of the form of Tragedy, in order to secure equal rights of public production. [Compare Aristotle's words: "It was late before Comedy obtained a *chorus* from the magistrate."]

Structure of Old Attic Comedy

The dramatic structure of Old Attic Comedy is thus that of Tragedy slightly modified.

1. **Prologue**: dramatic scene preceding the appearance of the Chorus.
2. **Parode** or **Chorus-Entry**: usually seized upon for special masque or pantomime effects.
3. An alternation of **Choral Odes** and **Episodes** to any number of each. The episodes (as in Tragedy) may include **Forensic Contest**, **Messenger's Speech**, and **Rheses**.
4. One (or more) of the Choral Interacts is usually given up to what is a special distinguishing feature of Old Attic Comedy, the **Parabasis** (or Digression), in which the Chorus faced the audience and spoke for the author as in a modern Preface.

The Parabasis has a structure of its own. 1. The *Introduction* [*kommation*]: a few short lines, bespeaking attention.—2. *Parabasis Proper* (usually in anapæsts): characterisation of Chorus dropped, they speak directly for the poet.—3. *Strophe*

and *Antistrophe* of dance and song, as a break, before and after the After-speech.—4. *After-speech* [*epirrhema*] and *After-response* [*ant-epirrhema*] in accelerated rhythm, dealing with some serious political topic: the characterisation of the Chorus usually resumed.

5. The **Exodus or Finale**: the dramatic scene following the last Choral break.

The metrical structure of Ancient Comedy is very rich—variation between one metrical style and another is always a source of effect.

Six metrical styles may be noted.—1. Blank Verse (*iambic senarius*: very close to English blank verse).—2. Lyrics: the regular medium for Choral Odes (rapid variation, usually strophic arrangement, dancing and musical accompaniment implied).—3. Accelerated Rhythm (*trochaics, long lines*).—4. Anapæsts: identified with Parabasis Proper and Invocation of Chorus (usually long lines, with shorter lines for climax).—5. Long Iambics [*iambic tetrameter*]: this and No. 4 regularly used for Forensic Contests, with a tendency to reserve No. 5 for the bad side.—6. Epic Rhythm [*hexameter*]: rarely used, for oracles, etc.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ANCIENT COMEDY

Owing to its abnormal origin Greek Comedy tended to develop with great rapidity; the force of natural evolution being assisted by two other forces:

- (a) The unstable equilibrium of elements in Old Attic Comedy, from its combination of tragic form with comic matter—Tragedy itself being, in form, an unstable combination of drama and lyric.
- (b) The passage from Greek to Roman: the Roman comic poets neither followed nor rejected Greek models, but used freely actual Greek comedies, which they altered, modified, combined, at will.

The evolution of Comedy seems even more rapid than it actually was owing to the loss of plays illustrating intermediate stages—ancient historians recognized:

Old Attic Comedy [450–400 B. C.]: all but plays of Aristophanes lost.

Middle Attic Comedy [400 B. C. to 350]: all lost.

New Attic Comedy [350 B. C. to 291]: all lost except so far as it is preserved in the Roman adaptations. [Chief name, Menander].

Roman Comedy is preserved in the works of Plautus [died 184 B. C.] and Terence [died 159 B. C.].

1. Evolution in Matter.

Old Attic Comedy seems to pass through the stages: Party politics—Literary party rivalry—Purely general or social satire.

In Roman Comedy the dramatic purpose [chiefly love] has become the main motive, and satire in the form of class-caricature [slaves, schemers, parasites, etc.] gravitates to the underplot.

2. Loss of specific distinctiveness [reversion to type] as Choral Comedy. The Chorus in Comedy was highly unstable, a foreign element introduced for non-literary reasons: even within the plays of Aristophanes it is seen developing in two opposite directions:

- (a) On the one hand the Chorus becomes more and more lyrical, losing connection with the plot, and approaching to the character of an *entre-acte*. [Compare *Plutus*.] In Roman Comedy it had fallen out, its place supplied by music. Comedy has thus reached its modern structure: successive 'Acts' separated by intervals.
- (b) On the other hand the Chorus increases its dramatic function and passes into the plot. [Compare the multiplication of Choruses in the *Lysistrata*.]

3. Development in Plot. The conception of plot in Old Attic Comedy was unique: (1) The origination and development of an Extravagant Fancy as a medium for satire. (2) But with this went the prominence of Incidental effects [*tours-de-force* of irrelevance or wit], making an aggregate of interest not inferior to that of the plot itself. In Roman Comedy we find:

- (a) The Extravagance has gradually changed into Probability [Complication and Resolution].
- (b) But the Incidental effects have unified and developed into a regular Underplot [Farce, Caricature, etc.].

The general form of plot in Roman Comedy is thus: An Opening Situation of Complication is developed to a Resolution. [In multiplication of actions (main and inferior) a Roman Comedy is as complex as an Elizabethan drama: but the unities of time and place are rigidly maintained.]

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ANCIENT AND MODERN DRAMA

1. The whole of the Ancient Drama may be regarded as a single piece of unbroken development. Tragedy had been the first to rise into elaborateness of literary form: its progress beyond Euripides was arrested, but meanwhile its form had, under exceptional circumstances, been taken over by Comedy, and this underwent continuous development up to the point of Roman (New Attic) Comedy. In this form:
 - (a) Ancient Drama anticipated two main characteristics of Modern Drama: distinction of passion-plot and action-plot, and multiplication of stories.
 - (b) On the other hand it had certain strict limitations: separation of Tragedy and Comedy—confinement to heroic myths in the former and a very narrow area of life in the latter—especially: the mere representation of the crisis of a story, involved in the unities of time and place.
2. The 'Dark Ages' succeed: with the almost total extinction of reading. In the ten centuries or more the place of Drama to the non-reading classes is taken by Story—the wandering class of jugglers, minstrels, trouvères, etc., purvey to the people fiction in narrated prose or verse. [Note the change in the meaning of 'tragedy' and 'comedy.']

At the close of the Dark Ages this mass of floating stories comes to be known as 'Romance,' from the Romance languages spoken by the minstrels.

3. The agency for bringing together this Drama of the Ancients and this Story of the Dark Ages was provided in the Old English Mysteries and Miracle Plays, which from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries served in the place of sermons, and had for their purpose the *application of dramatic form to (Scripture) Story*. [Not only would they act the incident proper to a Saint's Day independently of changes of scene and place, but the scenes gradually grew into the Collective Miracle Play, which in a succession of scenes put the history of the world from the Creation to the Day of Judgment. The effort after realism gave plenty of scope for the 'mixture of tones.']
4. Then came the 'Renaissance' of Classical Literature, reaching England fully in the Elizabethan period, and bringing all three elements together.
 - (a) Elizabethan Dramatists were mostly university and public school men, trained in the Ancient Drama.
 - (b) They took their materials from the story-books of the Middle Ages, and their main purpose was to dramatize the story.
 - (c) They played to audiences trained in the Mediæval English Drama of Miracles, Moralities, etc.

Hence the 'Romantic Drama,' which applies the dramatic strictness of Ancient Classical literature to Mediæval Romance. As a result of this union:

- (a) From the Ancient Drama the Romantic derived strict conceptions of plot, deep character interest, and high literary elaborateness.
- (b) The other ancestor, Story, broke down the classical unities of time and place, and caused the whole story to be acted, and not merely its crisis. [The multiplication of stories, substituting harmony of actions for unity of

action, had already been anticipated by the Roman Comedy.]

- (c) The influence of the Popular English Drama (Miracles, Mysteries, and Moralities), which brought the two elements of Drama and Story together, secured forever the mixture of tones, serious and comic, which was the main outcome of its realism.

Romantic Drama having thus been naturally developed, the individual genius of Shakespeare and his contemporaries solidified its literary qualities, and fixed it as one of the leading species of the Universal Drama.

TOPICS FOR EXERCISES OR DISCUSSION

I

1. Describe Socrates, as he was, and as he is made to appear in burlesque.
2. Dress the Chorus of Clouds for their part.

II

1. Show how Comedy served as the newspaper of antiquity.
2. Explain the word *comus*.

III

1. Give example of the ingenuity with which Aristophanes adapts bird life to human life.
2. Sketch an original plot, on the model of Old Attic Comedy, satirising 'expansion' or 'anti-expansion' ideas.

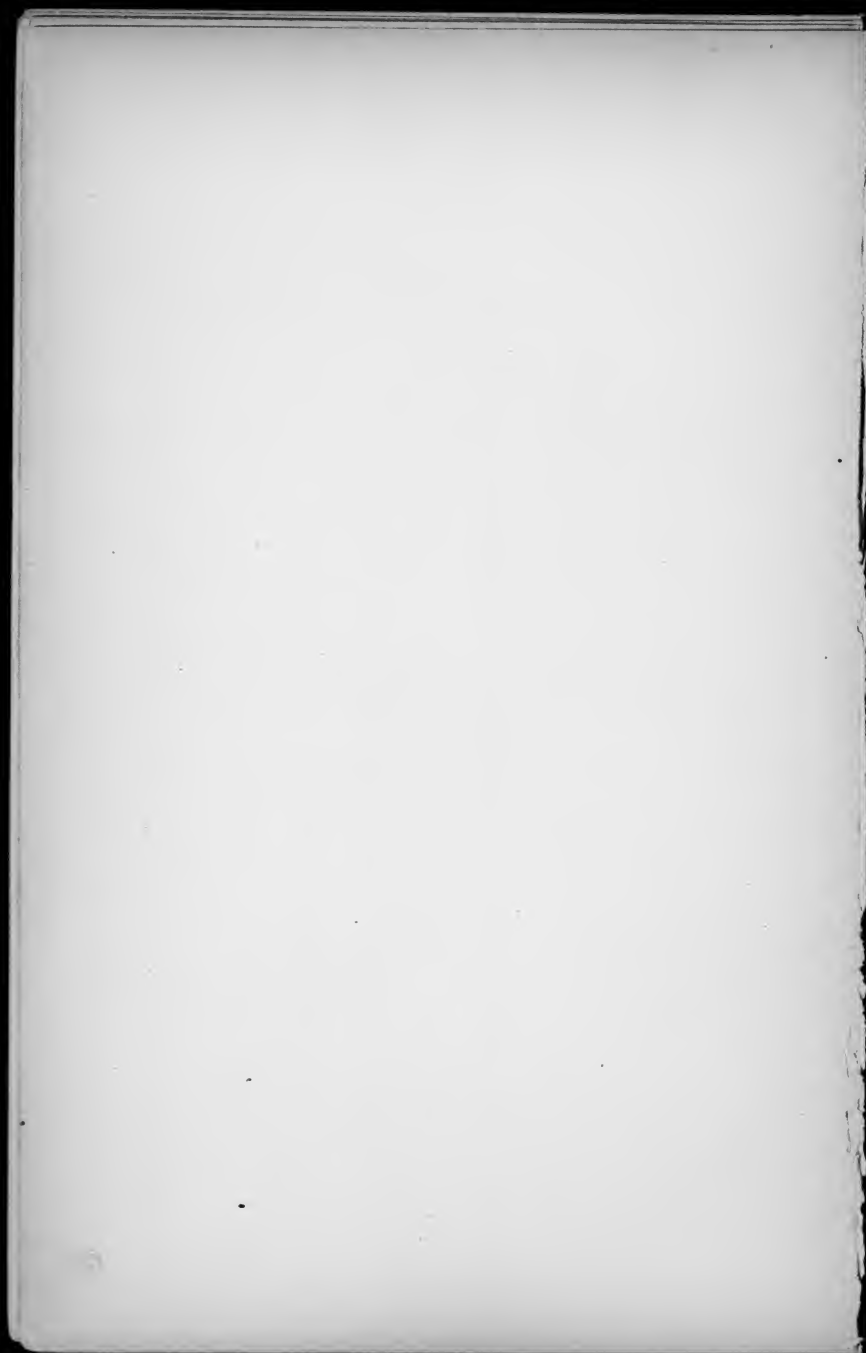
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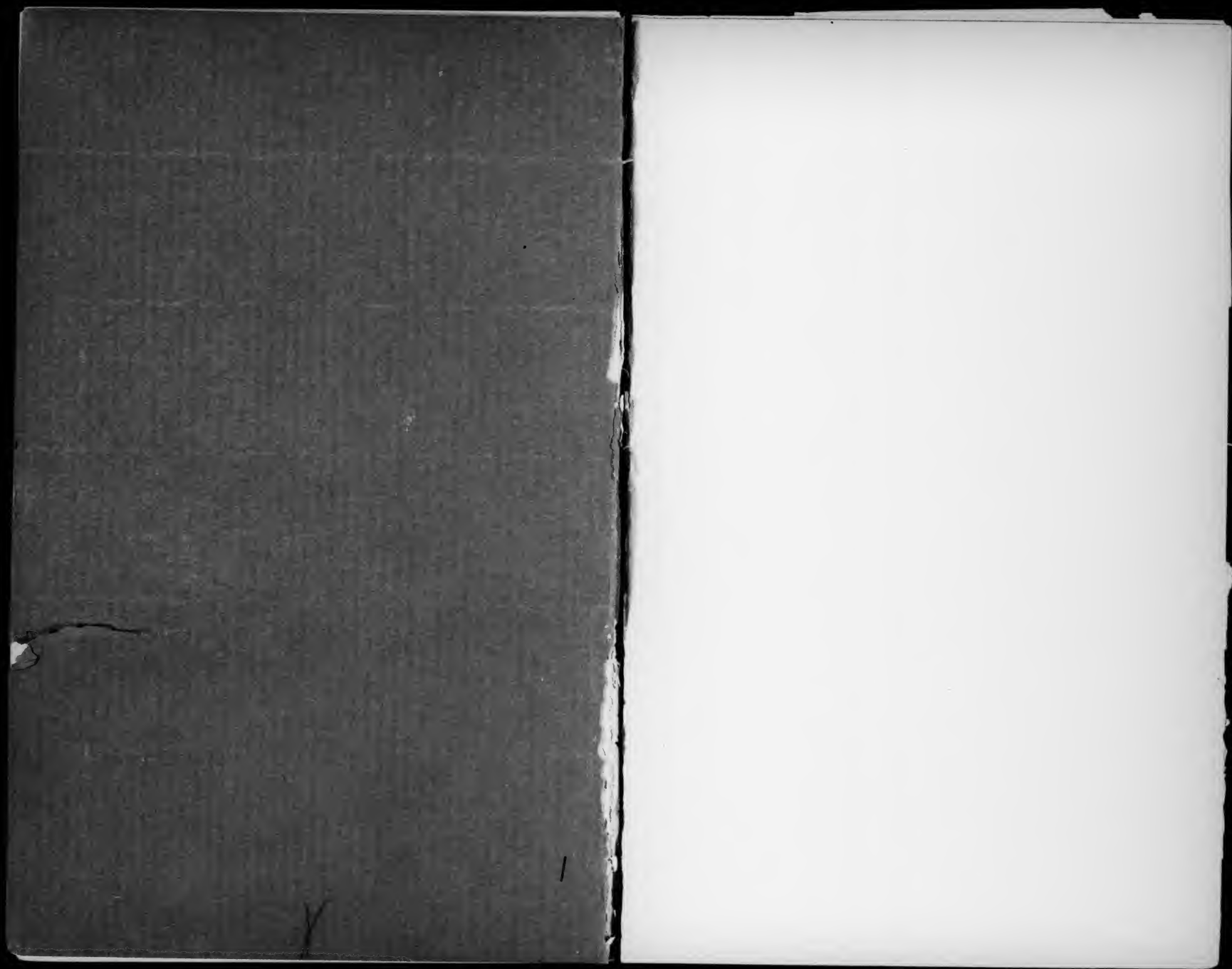
1. Show how the *Lysistrata* and *Plutus* are interesting in the history of Comedy.
2. Discuss the arguments of Poverty in the play.

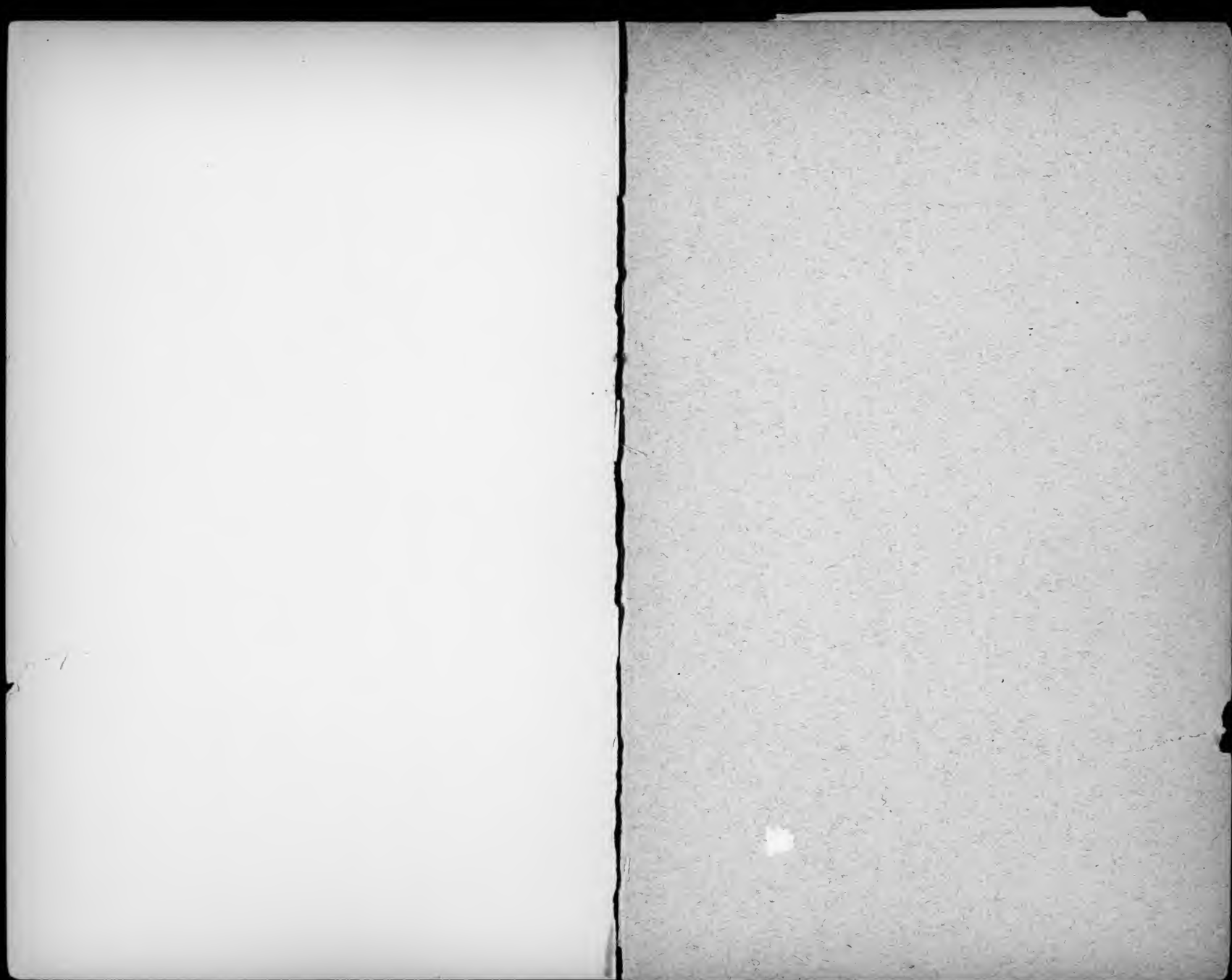
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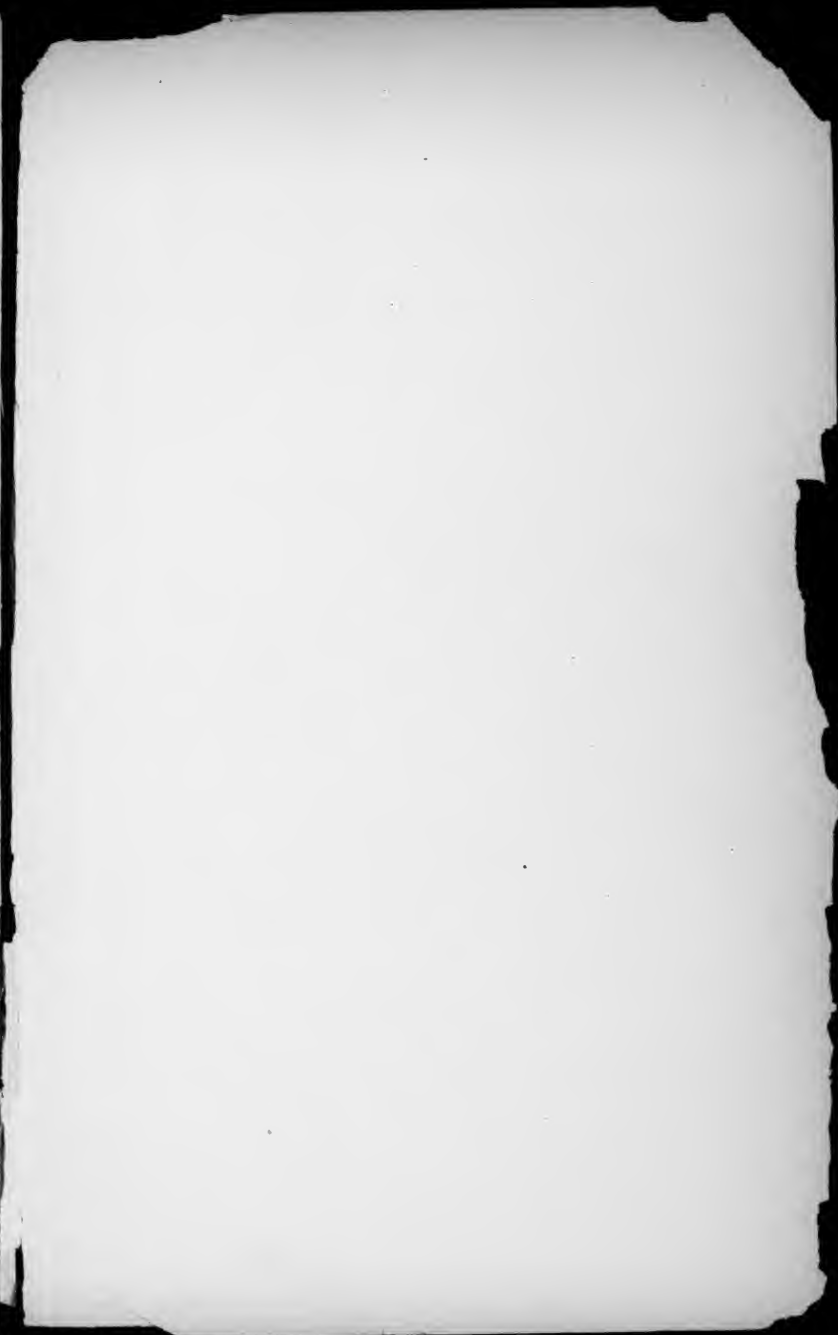
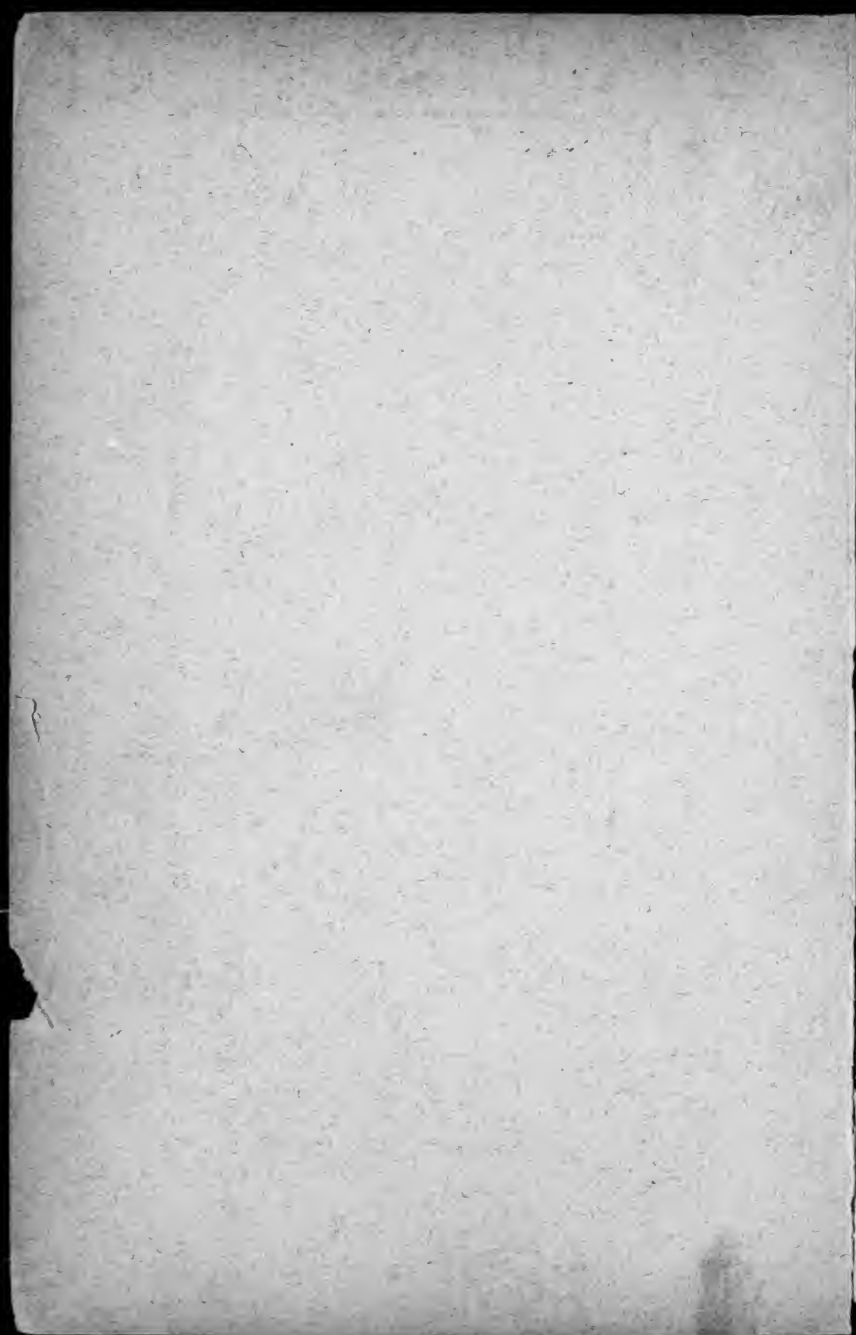
1. Describe the chief characters in the *Trinummus*.
2. Trace the plot of the *Trinummus* as "an opening Situation of Complication developed to a Resolution."











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